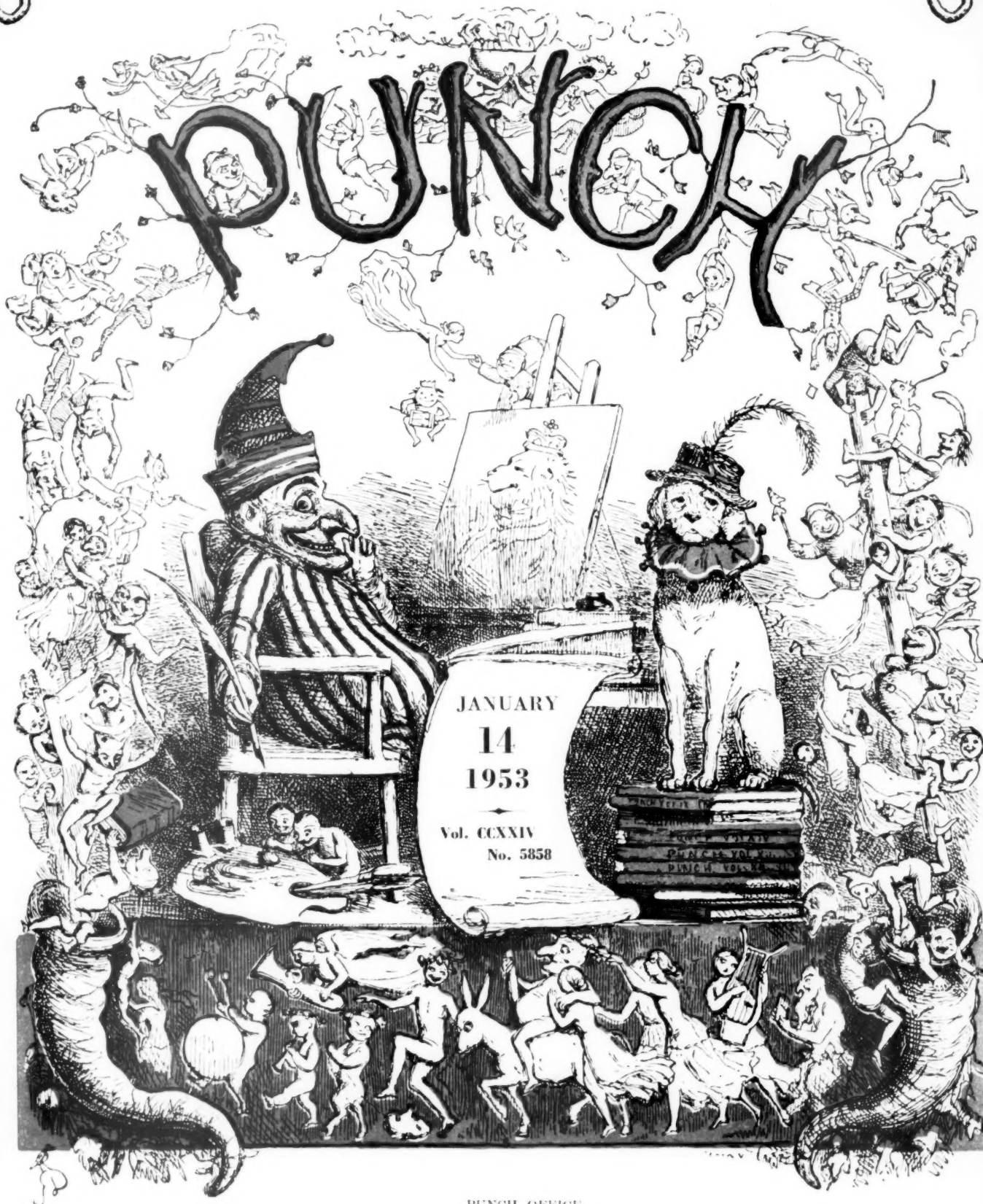


6<sup>d</sup>

PUNCH OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI—WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14 1953

6<sup>d</sup>

PUNCH OFFICE  
10 BOUVERIE STREET LONDON E.C.4

Insist on *Kunzle*  
Quality



**Art Dessert**

CHOCOLATE ASSORTMENT

... a compliment to Good Taste

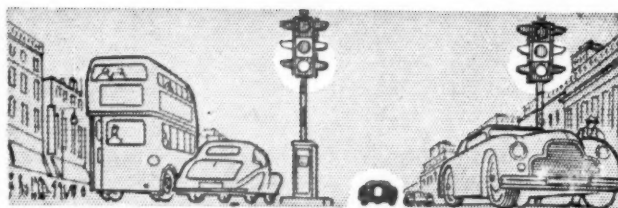
C. KUNZLE LTD., BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND

M-W.53

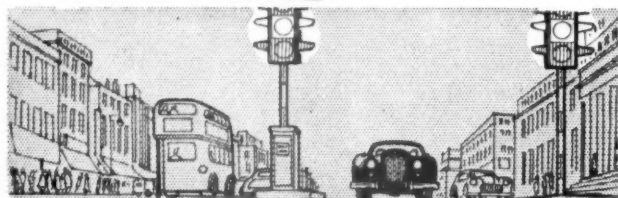


PLAYER'S NAVY CUT CIGARETTES  
MEDIUM OR MILD

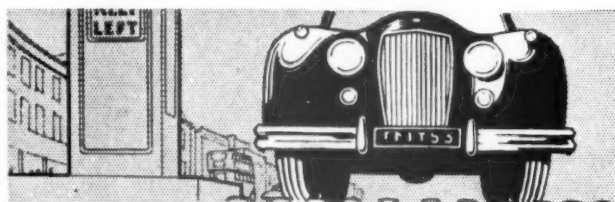
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**MAKE MOTORING  
REALLY SAFE**



**WITH FERODO  
THE ANTI-FADE  
BRAKE LININGS**



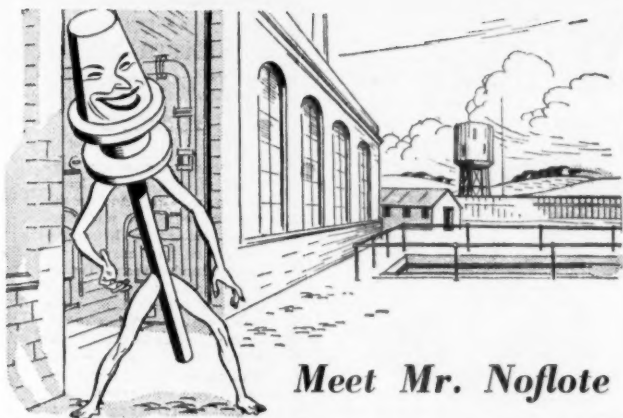
Brake drums are rather like people—they're apt to get rather hot and bothered. And a brake drum at 300° centigrade is quite hot enough to be bothered about . . . especially when a brake lining continues to be pressed against it with some force! With the searing heat of a brake drum as partner, linings sometimes will fade or lose efficiency. Ferodo Limited believe in research and testing and then more research and more testing, which is why Ferodo anti-fade brake linings will give you safer, smoother, more reliable braking under the trying conditions of modern motoring. Your guarantee that genuine Ferodo anti-fade linings have been fitted is the orange and black label which the garage will attach to your steering wheel after a re-line.



Brakes become inefficient so gradually that you may not be aware of it. Why not have them checked at a local garage displaying this sign? When a re-line is necessary—insist on

**FERODO  
BRAKE LININGS**

FERODO LTD · CHAPEL-EN-LE-FRITH A Member of the Turner & Newall Organisation



## Meet Mr. Noflote

### The Perfect Pump House Attendant

He's the ideal pump controller for sewage, water and industrial undertakings. As the liquid level varies, so he starts and stops the pumps—just does the right thing without being told. Never a moment off duty—not a penny piece for salary. He's relieved the station engineer of many a care and worry. Send for details in Publication PH.234.

## EVERSHED & VIGNOLES LTD

ACTON LANE, CHISWICK, LONDON, W.4

Telephone: CHISWICK 3670 : Telegrams: MEGGER CHISK LONDON 5/116

# Remington

The World's  
busiest  
Typewriter



By Appointment Wine Merchants  to the late King George VI

# HARVEYS OF BRISTOL

are as close to you as the  
nearest pillar box



Sherries from the  
World-famous  
'BRISTOL MILK'  
Cellars



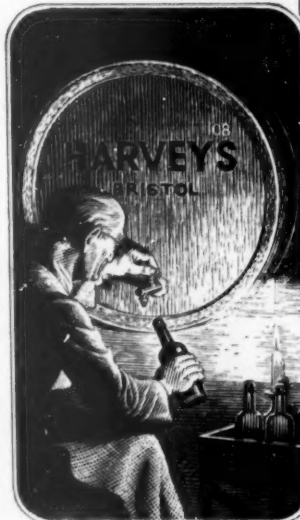
The sherry you offer reveals your taste and judgment. You of course know of "Bristol Milk" and "Bristol Cream" as two of the world's supreme sherries. Their price and scarcity, alas, at present preclude their being served regularly. But from the same famous cellars come other good sherries, more plentiful and at prices to suit the pocket for everyday use. This sample case enables you to compare six of these at your leisure and to select your preference for future use. Your hospitality will thenceforth be founded upon a sherry of distinction—Harvey's.

### The CASE of less expensive sherries contains

- 1 Bott. FINITA, full pale.
- 1 Bott. BROWN CAP, pale dry.
- 1 Bott. ANITA, light brown.
- 1 Bott. MERIENDA, pale medium dry.
- 1 Bott. CLUB AMONTILLADO, dry.
- 1 bott. FINO, light pale dry.

**FREE:** We also include with our compliments a ½ bottle of our "Hunting" Port, an example of a very fine Tawny Port which we offer at 22/- a bottle.

**CASE COMPLETE**  
inc. carriage and pckge. **114/-**



Send remittance to

## HARVEYS OF BRISTOL

JOHN HARVEY & SONS LTD.  
Founded 1796

HEAD OFFICE: 5 Pipe Lane, Bristol 1  
London Office:  
40 King Street, St. James's, S.W.1.



Subsidiary Companies or Branches at:  
Kidderminster, Cardiff, Portsmouth,  
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of Wolverhampton





"You look very thoughtful, Hugh. Practically pensive"

"I was thinking. I was thinking, I never tasted better bread than this"

"Yes, but you don't know how good it is"

"Do you mean it's good for me as well?"

"Indeed I do. It's Allinson Wholewheat"

"I can see it's brown"

"Allinson is not only naturally brown. It's got the full goodness of the grain. Nothing has been taken out. And nothing chemical put in. In fact nothing has been added to the flour except yeast, water and salt for baking"

"Then let's have another piece of toast. It's a pleasure to enjoy doing oneself good"



Allinson Wholewheat Bread makes marvellous toast and sandwiches. Untouched by chemicals the flour is stoneground and provides roughage, so valuable in these days of soft diets. For an attractive 32-page book of delicious wholewheat recipes, send 3d. in stamps to Allinson Ltd., 24, Newman St., London, W.1.

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# The EVER-HOT 'Warwick'

TEA SERVICE

with the  
**BUILT-IN LID**

This distinctive, new Tea Service has all the well-known EVER-HOT features:

- ★ Patented built-in lid (exclusive to Ever-Hot).
- ★ Mirror-bright chromium-plated covers.
- ★ Heat-insulating felt lining.
- ★ Best quality earthenware.

From all good stores, jewellers, etc.

Made by:  
Perry Bevan & Co. Ltd., Birmingham 6

By Appointment  
to the late  
King George VI



Charles H. Pugh Ltd.  
Motor Mower  
Manufacturers

# ATCO

*A nation-wide service  
organisation that is unique.*

The makers of Atco motor mowers operate Service Branches strategically situated throughout the British Isles in order to ensure that every one of the 145,000 Atcos now on active service in this country can be maintained in constant running order. If you own an Atco you will know that NOW is the time to have your machine serviced. Please contact your Atco Service Branch Manager. If you plan to buy a motor mower this year—remember none but an Atco can offer the same efficiency, economy or service facilities.



**Have your ATCO  
serviced now!**

CHARLES H. PUGH LTD., ATCO WORKS, BIRMINGHAM, 9

# COINTREAU

Extra Dry for England

The Finest Liqueur at any time

W. Glendinning & Sons Ltd.  
Newcastle upon Tyne 6

## RATTRAY'S 7 RESERVE TOBACCO

has been appreciatively described as an "all day long" smoking mixture. And for this purpose, indeed, it was specifically created by Rattray's—makers of fine mixtures for nearly a hundred years. Tended and blended by the skilled hands of craftsmen, no fewer than seven choice Virginian and Oriental tobaccos sustain the interest of the palate—each infusing its own characteristic into the rare symposium. Such a mixture can never pall. From morning to night, every pipeful of 7 Reserve is the peer of its predecessors.

From Preston—

"I consider that the obvious skill and care which you and your staff employ are rare qualities which merit praise."

To be obtained  
ONLY from:

**CHARLES  
RATTRAY**

Tobacco Blender  
PERTH, SCOTLAND



Price 7s. per lb., Post Paid. Send 19.6 for sample quarter-lb. tin, Post Free



## HEALTH RAY

Dual Purpose-2 in 1  
Ultra-Violet or Infra-Red

ULTRA-VIOLET RAYS will give you a wonderful tan, improve your appearance, form vitamins in the tissues and increase your vigour and vitality. Strongly antiseptic, they destroy germs. Pimples, blotchy and unhealthy skin yield quickly to their purifying action.

INFRA-RED RAYS relieve Rheumatism, Lumbago, Sciatica, Neuritis, Fibrositis, Influenza, Colds, Bronchitis, etc. Made for Home Use. Safe and easy to use. A.C./D.C.

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complete  
**£6.15.0**

**5 years' guarantee**  
Direct from the Makers  
The Health Ray  
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650,000 SOLD IN THE U.S.A. AND GREAT BRITAIN. Medical Certificate no longer necessary.

TEST THE HEALTH RAY at home for 7 days at our expense. If it does not ease your aches and pains or make you feel and look better—your money back in full. Thousands of Testimonials.

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Health Ray Co. Dept. PH. 22, Southampton.  
Please send details of your FREE TRIAL OFFER of the Health Ray.

Name

Address





Our  
carpets  
are  
so inviting

If ever a carpet said 'Welcome!'—it's a BMK. BMK carpets are so friendly. Their rich, warm colours glow with good cheer; the thick pile is so cosy underfoot. And BMK are rich, too, in Scottish tradition. They're born of the tough, springy wool of Scotch Black-faced sheep, blended with other fine wools, and woven with all the skill of old Kilmarnock. Here's carpet value that will see you comfortably through many a year!

**Mothproof for-ever!** All BMK carpets and rugs are made permanently mothproof. Even dry-cleaning, washing and wear-and-tear won't affect the mothproofing.



**mothproof  
CARPETS & RUGS**

BLACKWOOD MORTON KILMARNOCK



## There are obstacles in the way

She can lift him safely over obstacles at present—but, in the future, he will have to surmount them alone. That is why she must ensure NOW that he will have the stamina to meet whatever life brings.


The first thing is to give him that greatest of all gifts, a healthy Cow & Gate constitution. Wise mothers insist on Cow & Gate (the best that money can buy), in which thousands, including many Royal mothers, have put their trust. Get a tin today!



**COW & GATE MILK FOOD**

The FOOD of ROYAL BABIES



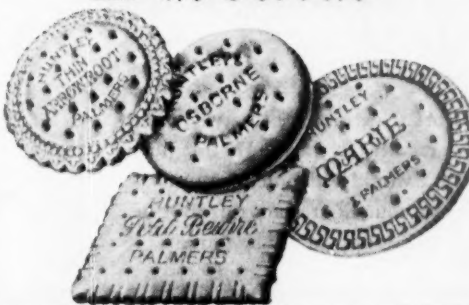


By Appointment,  
Biscuit Manufacturers to the late King George VI.

# Huntley & Palmers

*the first name you think of in*

## Biscuits



## The London Bedding Centre

Another JOHN PERRING Enterprise

sells  
the best  
Beds



A  
STAPLES  
MODEL

Queen Anne bedstead in walnut or mahogany, complete with side rails. 3ft. wide, tax free. **£10-1-0**

A large and varied selection of Bedding.

Come and see them ALL at—  
13 Brompton Rd, **KNIGHTSBRIDGE** S.W.3. Phone: KNightsbridge 1777  
or from any JOHN PERRING Branch:—

**KINGSTON-on-Thames** (Main Furniture Showrooms)

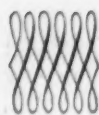
WORTHING  
OXFORD  
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WOKING  
RICHMOND

**JACKMANS Ltd**  
SOUTHEND  
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## An ABC of £sd

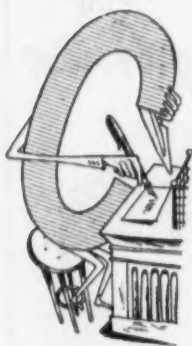


**ARTHUR** wasn't very well up in money matters. He thought a current account was something to do with electricity bills. And, of course, he was right in a way.

It's much more convenient, and safer too, to pay most bills by cheque through a banking account.

**BERNARD** was rather backward about coming forward. He imagined no bank would welcome him until he had a four-figure income. But he was barking up the wrong bank.

You don't need to be wealthy to enjoy the advantages of a current account at Lloyds Bank.



**CHARLES** liked a quiet life. He knew the benefits of a banking account but he thought there was a lot of fuss and palaver attached to opening one. He realised his mistake as soon as he entered the friendly atmosphere of Lloyds Bank.

The procedure for opening a current account at Lloyds Bank is simplicity itself.

*Have you read "Banking for Beginners"?  
Ask for a copy at any branch of Lloyds Bank.*

Let  
**LLOYDS BANK**

look after *your* interests



It is good 'public relations' to send out neat and well-typed letters. The work produced by Imperial typewriters is outstandingly good—the result of the scrupulous care we take at every stage of production. In our Leicester factories, the largest and most modern in the British Empire, a system of inspection and testing has been evolved which ensures that every typewriter—and every part of every typewriter—conforms to the highest standards of efficient performance.



**Imperial**

Made in Britain by British Craftsmen

IMPERIAL TYPEWRITER COMPANY LIMITED · LEICESTER  
CRC9

**L**IKE every indigent schoolboy, Nigel Tuckett needs a stout, generously gummed envelope\* to remind him (fleetingly) of his Uncle Percy, and to yield up a Postal Order.

To Nigel Tuckett it seems little short of a miracle that a simple slim flat paper case could contain such riches of sherbet and pop, caps, cough-sweets, comics and catapult-elastic.

He burns the covering letter in secret, aided by the sun's rays and a lens swopped this week for half of last week's seed-cake; none must see that it begins "Dear

old Curlytop" and ends "Your loving Nunk".

The Postal Order he converts as planned. That only leaves the envelope.

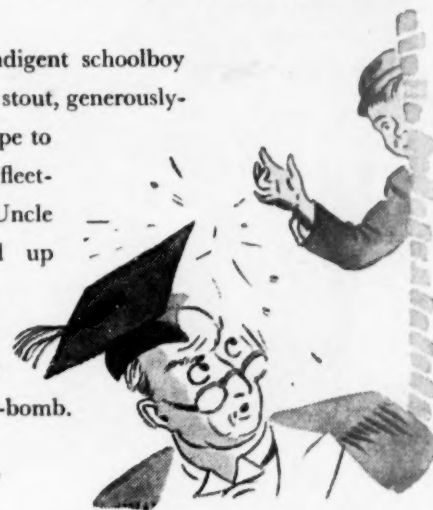
Has anything greater poignancy (except the scorched shell of a last



night's firework) than an envelope which once held a Postal Order and now no longer does? But when Tuckett has subjected it to a few wistful examinations, lest the Postal Order has been

left in there after all, he ceases to repine. Luckily it has other uses.

Like every indigent schoolboy Tuckett needs a stout, generously-gummed envelope to remind him (fleetingly) of his Uncle Percy, to yield up a Postal Order, and to become at last a really smashing water-bomb.



\* One of the RIVER SERIES for preference. A good, durable Don Cartridge would be just the ticket for Tuckett, our fictitious schoolboy.



There are several features that distinguish River Series from ordinary envelopes—their smart modern "Square Cut" appearance—all have generous gumming of flaps and wide overlap of seams to provide security—and all are made from British high-quality papers. Your local Stationer or Printer will readily arrange supplies.

## River Series envelopes

THERE ARE OVER 260 different sizes and shapes of Manilla, Cream Laid, Air Mail, Cartridge and Parchment envelopes in the 'River Series' range.

**★ FREE SAMPLE BINDER**

We shall be delighted to send to professional and business houses our newest sample binder of River Series envelopes. It will prove most helpful in deciding the best for every separate envelope requirement.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

FIRM \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_





*The Rivas of Italy . . . .  
enchating resorts of  
international fame . . . .*

Reductions for tourists on the  
cost of railway travel and petrol.  
"Travel at will" railway tickets—  
Petrol Coupons.



Information from:  
ITALIAN STATE TOURIST OFFICE (E.N.I.T.)  
201 Regent Street, London, W.1, and all Travel Agencies

### Pension and Life Assurance Schemes

The STANDARD has had a long experience of Pension and Life Assurance Schemes. It has a large department solely employed in the service of over a thousand schemes. STAFF SCHEME SUPERINTENDENTS are trained in the approach to managements and in explaining schemes to employees. They are experts in all the intricacies of Income Tax and their services are available in any part of the country.

### Pensions for Senior Employees

Where a Pension Scheme is already in operation or where the inauguration of one is not possible, it may still be the wish of an employer to secure or augment the retirement benefits of selected employees. This can best be done by Endowment Assurance policies, with Income Tax allowance on the premiums.

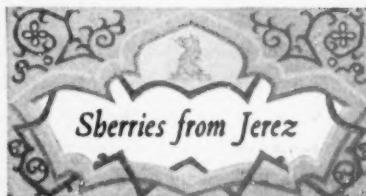
You are invited to write for further details

### The Standard Life Assurance Company

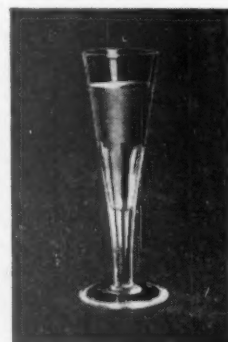
Head Office : 3 George Street, Edinburgh  
London Office : 3 Abchurch Yard, Cannon  
Street, E.C.4. Branches throughout the  
United Kingdom and Canada.



Chaplins is a name to conjure with in the wine trade — for it is close on ninety years since Chaplins brought their first batch of fine sherries from Jerez de la Frontera. Connoisseurs of sherry, whether their taste be for light or dark, say Chaplins and there's an end to it. Chaplins it has to be. Here's a choice of six of the best to suit all tastes.

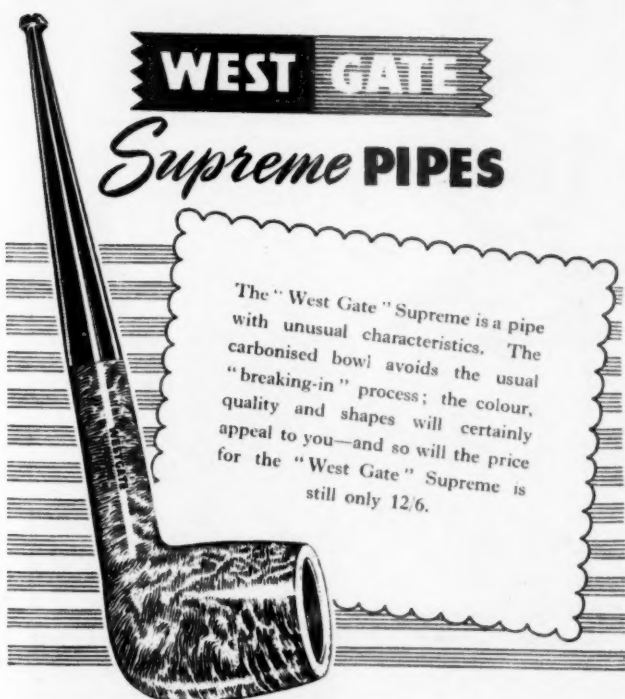


**CHAPLINS**  
*fine sherries*  
*and Concord ports*



CELESTA a delicate pale dry Fino  
MARINA a rare Manzanilla  
St. TERESA distinctive Amontillado  
PLAZA an old golden Oloroso  
TOM BOWLING rich brown Oloroso  
TARANTELA traditional dark sherry

W. H. Chaplin & Co. Ltd, Tower Hill, London, EC3  
W. H. Chaplin & Co. (Scotland) Ltd, 33 Botwell Street, Glasgow G2



## WEST GATE Supreme PIPES

The "West Gate" Supreme is a pipe with unusual characteristics. The carbonised bowl avoids the usual "breaking-in" process; the colour, quality and shapes will certainly appeal to you—and so will the price for the "West Gate" Supreme is still only 12/6.

THE ROBERT SINCLAIR TOBACCO COMPANY LTD., WESTGATE RD., NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE, 1

*'But there's very little difference between inks, is there?'*



'Up to a point. But beyond that point Stephen's Radiant Fountain Pen Ink does have an edge. You'll find that Stephen's is the best ink for your pen. That's because it's micro-filtered to make clogging impossible. It is the smoothest-flowing, cleanest ink you can buy.'

'You'll like the clever tilt-wipe collar they've introduced on their new bottle, as well. The collar tilts the bottle securely so that you get the last drop. It is lined with blotting paper for wiping your pen clean after filling.'

## Stephen's RADIANT MICRO-FILTERED INK for your fountain pen

AVAILABLE IN BLUE-BLACK (Permanent)  
RADIANT BLUE (Washable), SCARLET & GREEN

2½ oz. bottle 1/2d at better stationers and stores



P. 1

## left in the cold!

... he doesn't mind, with his white coat of millions of hairs to keep him nicely insulated against arctic storms. Millions of evenly dispersed cells make Darlington 85% Magnesia the best industrial insulation.

Our group Technical Division can show how up to 90% of your waste heat can be saved by the installation of 85% Magnesia.

**DARLINGTON**  
**85% MAGNESIA**  
*Insulation*

Manufacturers: **THE CHEMICAL & INSULATING CO. LIMITED DARLINGTON**  
Insulation Contractors: **THE DARLINGTON INSULATION CO. LIMITED, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE**  
Sheet Metal Fabricators: **S. T. TAYLOR & SONS LIMITED, TEAM VALLEY, GATESHEAD-ON-TYNE**





## Portrait of a salesman

Shrewd people expect a manufacturer to pack his product in a modern, designed-for-the-job container. They expect him to protect his goods from the slightest scratch or damage. They expect a pack that looks proud of its contents. In short, it is the pack that sells the quality of the product. That is why to-day the best products are packed in Medway corrugated cases. In the manufacture of these cases the Medway Corrugated Paper Company excels — making the corrugated strawboard, lining it with tough kraft paper and turning it into corrugated cases. Each case, planned to give the maximum protection to the goods it is to carry, is a reminder of the part which the Reed Paper Group, with all its resources, plays in the development of new packaging methods.

\* REED PAPER GROUP PACKAGING includes multi-wall sacks; corrugated paper and cases; kraft and M.G. sulphite wrappings; grease-proof and waxed papers.

**MEDWAY**  
CORRUGATED CASES

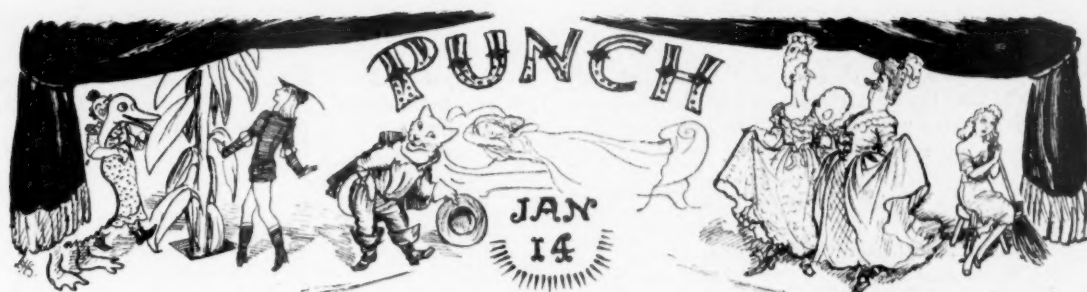
Products of  
THE MEDWAY CORRUGATED PAPER CO. LTD  
Division of the

**Reed**  
PAPER GROUP

ALBERT E. REED & CO. LTD  
THE LONDON PAPER MILLS CO. LTD · EMPIRE PAPER MILLS LTD  
THE MEDWAY CORRUGATED PAPER CO. LTD · REED FLONG LTD  
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THE NATIONAL CORRUGATED PAPER CO. LTD  
REED PAPER SALES LTD · E. R. FREEMAN & WESCOTT LTD  
POWELL, LANE MANUFACTURING CO. LTD

Head Office: 105 Piccadilly London W.1





## CHARIVARIA

**T**HE disclosure by a Sunday paper that a large firm of multiple tailors is equipped with telephones for outgoing calls only has been received calmly by Post Office officials. This despite a spokesman's admission that no plan exists to deal with the situation that would arise if the practice became nation-wide.

~ ~

"The *Evening News* Family Doctor Tells You To  
BE YOUR OWN DOCTOR"  
Article heading in the *Evening News*

Packing it in, is he?

~ ~

Students of well-known Press commentators will by now be aware that 1953 is going to be no picnic. What developments will it bring in Korea and Indo-China, Kenya and Malaya? No one knows. Nor can anyone tell with certainty what course will be set by the new hand at the American helm; what ground will be lost or gained in the stern tug-of-war in Berlin. Will true integration be achieved in the Atlantic community? Is progress to be made, at last, with German and Japanese rearmament? Can the United Nations Organization, this year, fulfil even a part of its early promise? Only time can tell. European unity is still elusive. Home economics remain unsure. What of Persia? What of General Neguib? Russia feigns quiescence, but can we guess what plans are shaping in the Kremlin, under the lights that burn all

night? We cannot. We must wait and see. Meanwhile it may do no harm to recall that the twelve months just past had their dark queries too, not all of them unsolved. On December 31, a well-known Press commentator began his article: "Outstanding question of the Old Year—can Fulke Walwyn achieve his ambition of saddling 100 winners during 1952?"

~ ~

The advocates of financial parity between the sexes may have overlooked the fact that women are already substantially ahead in one respect: they have five years less to wait for their post-war credits.

~ ~

"The Council will be recommended by the Estates Committee to approve acceptance of a quotation of Messrs. — at £55 11s. for supplying a new Mayoral robe, and that of — and Co., Ltd., at 15 guineas for a rope for the Deputy Mayor."

*Southern Daily Echo*

Well, that's politics.

~ ~

Reporters conducting an inquiry into the state of the roads on behalf of a national newspaper found on sixty miles of highway 519 intersections, 74 pedestrian crossings, 24 schools, 20 traffic lights, three level crossings, nine double bends, 45 bad bends, 20 very narrow stretches, 10 narrow bridges, four low bridges and eight humped bridges—and in the last thirty miles



DOUGLAS.



had to make 85 gear changes and brake suddenly 43 times behind heavy lorries slowing at sharp corners. Their wives, who went along for the ride, got their voices back the following day.

#### What Manchester Thinks Today . . .

"Mr. Henry Farr writes from Wigan: The following are the titles of some of the pictures shown in Wigan this week: 'The Killers,' 'Before I Hang,' 'The League of Frightened Men.' At the children's matinee the title was 'I Shot Jesse James.'" *Correspondence in the Manchester Guardian, December 30*

"I award last week's silver knuckle-duster to Wigan. Among the pictures shown there in seven days were 'The Killers,' 'Before I Hang' and 'The League of Frightened Men.' The choice for the children's matinee was 'I Shot Jesse James.'" *"Cassandra" in the Daily Mirror, December 31.*

#### "NEW JOINT BODY FOR CLOTHING INDUSTRY"

*Headline in The Times*

Any old-fashioned wax window-models going cheap?

A visitor newly returned from America reports that the habit of addressing people as "Mac" has gone out of fashion. This may only be since McCarthyism, McCarranism and McGraneryism came in.

Newspaper solicitude for the reader's welfare brought the usual crop of wise advice for successful living in the months ahead, including a recommendation, from the *News Chronicle*, that housewives should resolve to be gay and confident with colour in 1953,

"If twenty-year-old France Dauvillaire ever wants another job she has a good reference. She has been elected, in Paris, Miss Typist, 1952. Keys to her success—charm, courtesy, and good looks."—*Daily Graphic*

Type, at all?

## SIGH NOT FOR SHUNTER FRAMPOLE

AS I wait for my train to start the loud-speakers say "Will Inspector Butterwick please ring Extension Five Seven?" And a few minutes later: "Will Shunter Frampole report to the station-master's office!" And I wonder.

What can they want, these people who have their desires shouted all over stations? What is this constant, back-stage to-do? Running a railway station is not, it would appear, a mere matter of glancing at time-tables, saying "Ah, yes—time for the 5.15, I see," and going and seeing about it. Though that, I have no doubt, is the way they would prefer it to appear to the travelling public, who like things to

look as easy as they are convinced they must be, and therefore as foolproof as they hope they are.

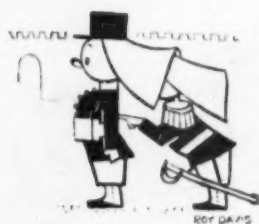
But the effect, I reflect after a glance at my watch, is spoilt by these appeals for Inspector Butterwick and Shunter Frampole. It makes the traveller aware that there is more than meets the eye: hidden depths concealed, paradoxically enough, up two flights of wooden stairs, in gas-lit offices which the public is certain there is no room for if the station is built as it appears to be, which stations never are. Behind the false railway façade of soot and simplicity is a whole world of secret worry. A world of little rooms lined with clipped bundles of pencilled papers, the pictures from last year's calendars, telephones that work only after you've turned a handle, and roll-top desks with dimly-burning lamps standing on piles of old excursion handbills.

That, at least, is the picture in the mind's eye of the traveller who, looking again at his watch, hears a repeat broadcast for Shunter Frampole.

What *can* they want with Shunter Frampole? Inspector

Butterwick is easy. Inspector Butterwick can be visualized without difficulty in one of those offices, leaning nonchalantly on a glass case containing a model of Stephenson's "Rocket" that no longer works, discussing high policy with men in important hats. He is too weighty a man in the scheme to be summoned peremptorily to whatever encloses Extension Five Seven. They ask him to ring them so that they can inquire if he would mind just stepping over for a minute. But Shunter Frampole not only gets no "please" and an almost visible exclamation-mark, he is denied the dignity of a telephonic preamble.

I experience a surge of pity for Shunter Frampole. He has, I am certain, mis-shunted something in which the station-master had a personal interest. Somewhere in his trampings up and down some remote siding or windy platform in boots that hurt, he has coupled something to something else with an easy twiddle of his hooked pole, and away it has gone to somewhere dreadfully inapt. Shunter Frampole may have sent coals to Newcastle.



"... Haircut."

Another glance at my watch, but the memory of its face fades before a picture of Shunter Frampole, flushed and fidgeting with his pole, the hook of which he has just discovered to be loose. They are talking to him most firmly.

"This," they are telling him, "cannot go on, Shunter Frampole. British Railways demand your whole-hearted co-operation, or there is no room for you here. What is more, we observe that your hook is loose. A hook-loose shunter is anathema, Frampole, anathema..."

The watch-face memory re-asserts itself and I jump up, open the window and stick my head out.

All pity for Shunter Frampole fades. I know now why they sent for him.

It can have been only Shunter Frampole, the fool, who failed to couple my coach to a train now doubtless half-way home.

## NO SKILL REQUIRED

THE man in the first little picture contemplates the crack in the wall with a look of quiet confidence.

I contemplate the crack in the wall with a look of quiet confidence.

The man in the second little picture is running a sharp knife down the crack. He is "bevelling off the underside of the plaster."

I am running a sharp knife down the crack. Perhaps it is not a sharp knife. I am picking fragments of plaster from the carpet. They are large fragments.

The man in the third little picture is "pressing Stampfast into the prepared cavity with a flexible knife-blade." He is doing so with considerable *élan* and a smile, caused no doubt by the thought that "Stampfast is easy to work and will not stain or stick to the hands."

I am pressing Stampfast into the prepared cavity. My cavity is bigger than his. My knife-blade is not flexible. My Stampfast is on the floor. So are some fragments of plaster. They are very large fragments. Stampfast does not stain or stick to the hands (or the wall).

Stampfast does stain and stick to the carpet—to the hair—to the suit. I am seizing the fallen Stampfast. I am discarding my knife-blade. I am pressing the Stampfast with both hands to the wall. Small fragments of plaster mottle its surface.

The man in the fourth little picture is gently smoothing off the surface of his work, again with that flexible knife-blade.

I am smoothing off the surface of my work. My surface is greater than his. I do not use a flexible knife-blade. I use a smoothing iron. For the record, Stampfast sticks to smoothing irons. My cavity is once more empty. Fiercely I am pressing the Stampfast into place again with the iron.

The man in the fifth little picture is lighting his pipe and gazing with justifiable pride at the

results of his work. There is not a mark on the wall.

I am watching my Stampfast slowly curl up at the edges and fall to the floor. I am not filled with vain regrets. I have no time. I am too busy watching a square yard of plaster fall to the floor. My hair stands stiff and straight on my head. I am not filled with horror. I am covered with Stampfast.

There is no man in the sixth little picture. Instead there is seen a tube of Stampfast (bumper household size, 7/6d., holds three times as much). On the picture of the tube of Stampfast there can be seen six very little pictures.

The man in the first very little picture contemplates the crack in the wall with a look of quiet confidence...

I do not.



"What a swindle—it was exactly the same as the book."



## WORMS AND MEN

WITH only another twenty-three days left to lodge objections against the scheme for dearer fares, it is disconcerting to have one's attention distracted by earthworms, of which there are upwards of half a million in an acre of moderately good soil. I had thought it would be less, but here is the figure in black and white in one of those books about the delights of nature (*Enjoying the Country*, by E. Fitch Daglish) that thoughtless people leave on my desk.

Half a million worms is quite a party, if you care to make a strong effort of the imagination and visualize them in the mass. There must be a clear hundred thousand of them wriggling about in my quarter-acre patch of garden, and only one robin, at the time of going to press, to see to the lot. The thought leaves me disinclined to go out. I have also two hundred and fifty thousand wireworms. Ill-conditioned and jealous readers who doubt this have not read *Insect Natural History* in the "New Naturalist" series, which clearly states that an infestation of from three hundred to six hundred thousand wireworms per acre is not heavy enough to interfere with crops, but that over a million per acre is "definitely dangerous." The state of the crops in my garden amply justifies my claim to the maximum.

My three hundred and fifty thousand worms of both species will be joined later on by a number of aphides, or greenfly. It may seem a little early in the year to be yarning about greenfly, but a breath of summer does us all good in the dark, cheerless days of midwinter. The facts about the female Aphid are as follows. She is liable to have several daughters daily during her brief breeding life, up to a total of perhaps fifty. These young ladies are grown up in just over a week and settle down at once to family life on their own. There will be, my book tells me, some dozen generations descended from a single "stem-mother" during the summer, so that the family party by the end

of the season will total (50)<sup>12</sup>. I make this 2443 followed by seventeen noughts, or a matter of two hundred and forty-four million billion odd.

Well now, we must keep a sense of proportion. Greenfly have their tragedies, just like anyone else. Many a young life will be nipped in the bud by marauding birds or washed away in a pitiless flood of quassia chips, soft soap and water. Losses in the first half-dozen generations will be felt particularly seriously when the time comes for the end-of-season reunion at stem-mother's knee. (To take an extreme case, if the stem-mother herself is picked off at the start of her career, the final tally will be nil.) In an average year I dare say only a few thousand million may survive. But as against that, it must be remembered that we have so far considered only one stem-mother, and my experience tells me that quite a number of these philoprogenitive creatures come to my garden in April or May. What I lose on the beans I shall certainly make up on the rose-beds, so that it would be a grudging spirit indeed that challenged my confident expectation of being about to harbour some thousand million billion of these colourful creatures.

There are more spiders to the acre than anything else. I came across this bit of information months ago, and jotted the figure down on several sheets of paper; but interfering hands have swept it away, perhaps under the impression that I had spent the day practising Giotto's freehand circle. All I can say about spiders, therefore, is that I have plenty—and the same thing goes for beetles of all kinds, woodlice, millipedes, slugs and those little black-and-gold insects that wave to you from the interstices of rotting rose-poles. All in all, there must be quite a crowd in my quarter-acre, and more coming shortly.

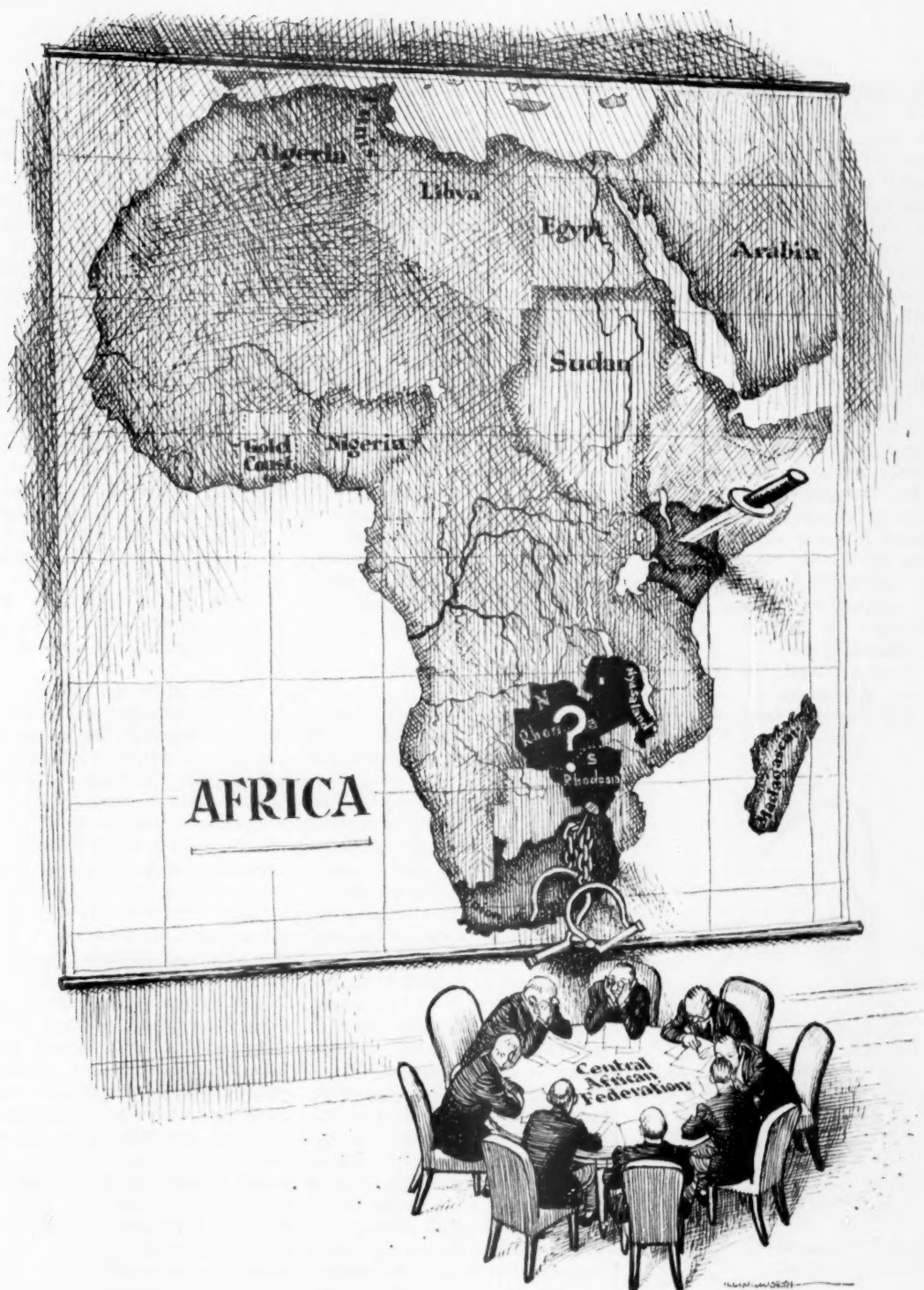
These statistics, which seem to me at least as interesting as those given at the end of the *Evening Standard* "Londoner's Diary" every day—"At the last count, in 1950, there were 551,214 retail shops in Britain." What of it? I could give them a thousand billion greenfly each and hardly notice the loss—these statistics, I say, have to some extent diverted my attention from the proposed rise in fares, about which I had hoped to write seriously to-day. But the exercise has not been altogether fruitless. One cannot spend an hour in the contemplation of nature's marvels and beauties without feeling cleansed, ennobled, prepared to observe the follies of mankind with a more tolerant, a more balanced gaze. What, after all, is an increase of 2d. on early morning return fares for journeys on British Railways outside the London area compared with two hundred and forty-four million billion greenfly in (or about to be in) my garden?

Nature laughs at the pompous announcement of such trivia. Is it to be supposed that even one of my three hundred and fifty thousand worms will turn?

H. F. ELLIS



"Now do you remember what day it is?"



ONE PROBLEM

## THIS WEEK'S DISCOVERY

"NEXT," said a grey fur voice, "we have a young man who has been making a big name for himself in the north and who is rapidly becoming a favourite with television audiences—the irrepressible little fellow with the big heart and the unhappy home-life—RAYMOND TOMPKIN." There was a noise like millions of gramophone needles falling downstairs and then another voice, rather like a radio comedian's only louder and shriller, said "Are y'all right?"

The noise, which could easily have been caused by a lot of people laughing in a room rather too small for them, was repeated. Something in Mr. Tompkin's appearance had evidently caught everybody's fancy. Perhaps it was a way he had perfected of waving his ears or perhaps, like a man I once saw when I was pausing in Preston, he was revolving his bow-tie like an aeroplane propeller.

Short of ringing up there was no way of knowing.

The noise died away, then rose

up again, then died away again, then rose up again.

Could Mr. Tompkin be eating his buttonhole—I've seen that happen somewhere I'm almost sure—or had his hat fallen over his eyes and prevented his seeing that he was walking deliciously near to the edge of the platform he was presumably standing on? Either of these things would, of course, have been splendidly funny. On the other hand it might have been something of an altogether different nature, such as the leader of the orchestra's being close by and Mr. Tompkin with many a sly nod, many an expressive wink, stroking his hair.

"Are y'all right?" said Mr. Tompkin again, just when it seemed as if he had quite forgotten his obligations to his wider public.

"Ye-e-e-es!" The word came and went like a great shower of pebbles flung against a window pane.

"Are y'appy in y'work?"

"Ye-e-e-es!"

"Are y'quite shooer? No, really; I mean it. Honest, no kiddin'," said Mr. Tompkin; "not everybody's happy you know, not by a long chalk. Y'ought to meet my brother Percy. Oh, he's a case, my brother Percy. Do you know, he's so mean is my brother Percy, he's so mean that when he's invited to a wedding, when he's invited to a wedding, he takes along a bagful of confetti with cotton tied to every little piece so that after he's flung it at the bride he can haul it all back ready for use another time? No, honest," continued Mr. Tompkin through the uproar that had arisen, "it's a fact. Oh, he's a case, my brother Percy! He's duft too. He is really. Do you know, he's so duft that the other day he applied to be a tight-rope walker at Piccadilly Circus? No, that's right. I'm telling you.

"And that's not all. That's not all. The other day my brother Percy went to a swanky restaurant down Paradise Lane"—there was a tremendous clatter at this—"he went to a swanky restaurant down

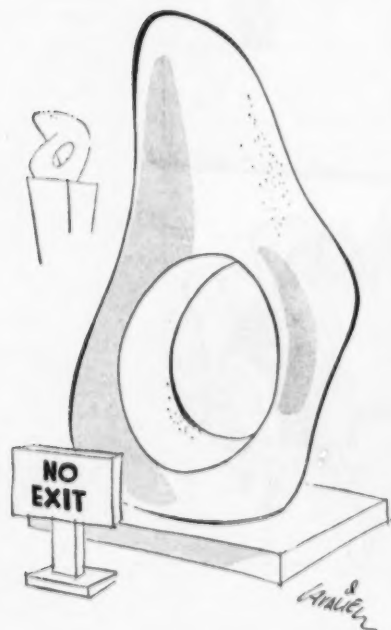
Paradise Lane for a bit o' grub. He sat hisself down at a little table, and after a brief interval of about three quarters of an hour up comes a waiter, he were just a little bloke no bigger than George Coe" (piercing yells of, presumably, delight), "up comes a waiter and says to my brother Percy, 'Good afternoon, sir,' he says, 'would you like cantaloupe to commence with?'

"Well my brother Percy he takes wan look, he takes wan look at this waiter, then he draws hisself up to his full height, five foot three in his wrist-watch"—Mr. Tompkin paused here but the people didn't get it so he went on—"he draws hisself up to his full height and he says 'I'll tell you what I'll have, young fellow, I'll have a word with your foreman, that is if he's got out of bed yet.'"

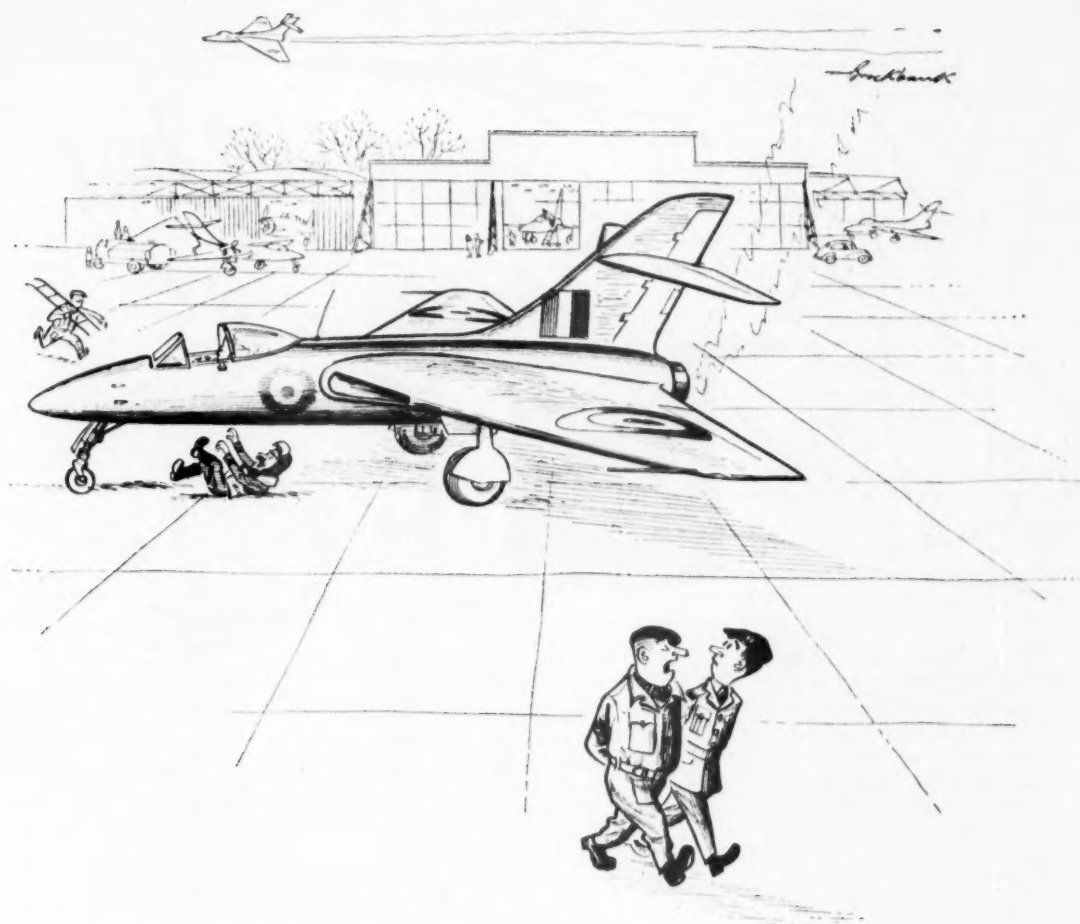
This was exceptionally well received, mostly with whistles, and made everything somehow worth while.

"Well after a further short interval up comes the manager, see," said Mr. Tompkin, "up comes the manager; he were ever such a gent, proper posh, Eton and Oxtail and all that—his name were Billy Drew"—*Laughter*—"and he says"—here Mr. Tompkin gave evidence of his versatility with a sudden swift change of character—"Actooally... actooally," he says, "Aim the jolly old manager, don't you know. Aim the jolly old manager," he says. "Would anything be amiss?"

"Well my brother Percy, he looks this geezer up and down proper old-fashioned. 'Would anything be amiss?' he says. 'That's rich,' he says, 'that's real rich. Pardon me while I just pop upstairs and split my sides with helpless merriment. Would anything be amiss? I'll tell you would anything be amiss, my old Mr. Alleged Manager. I come in here on a bright summer morning for a quiet bit o' grub. I sit here minding my own business, harming nobody, patiently waiting, peacefully watching the trees gradually turning to burnished







*"Another Reserve officer casually stepping out on to a wing that ain't there any more."*

gold and shedding their ruddy leaves and I'm just about wondering whether I'm going to miss Christmas altogether, when all of a sudden along shuffles this joker, along shuffles this joker, walking as if he'd lost his way under water, and tells me that if I like, if I'm a good boy, just to kick off with, just to get me off to a good start like, I can have flippin' antelope for dinner."

There was an extraordinary amount of noise after this, supplemented by clapping and the sound of Mr. Tompkin making laughing noises and saying "I'll slay myself one of these days, I will really."

Then quite suddenly Mr. Tompkin seemed to sort of pull himself together and in a serious, rather strangled, highly emotional voice which he may have thought was his own, he said "And now, ladies and gentlemen, I have very great pleasure in singing to you a little song which I recently had the very great honour of introducing on to the air for the very first time. This little number will, I feel confident, appeal to young and old, rich and poor alike, for it has a message which is, I believe, close to the heart of every one of us. Its title, by the way, is a simple infectious one—'Chin-chin Cheerio.'"

As if by some prearranged signal there came a great swirl of music—music lilting, swaying, catching up everything in its path, carrying it along in one great glorious surge of sound. And through the middle of it all came the voice of Mr. Tompkin, soft yet insistent, subtly charged with feeling, somewhere between a sob and a sergeant-major.

"When clouds are grey and things go wrong," said Mr. Tompkin, "banish care, don't despair, just repeat this o-o-o-o-old refrain, Chin-chin chin up, cheery cheerio. Chin-chin chin up wherever you may go; chin-chin chin . . ."

DANIEL PETTIWARD

## CURRENT ACCOUNT



AS Jimmy Durante used to say, and probably still does, "Everybody wants to get into the act." Perhaps it needs a slight wrench to suit the present survey: everybody has an act and wants to get into the agency. You wouldn't think, to see London hunched staidly in its Tubes and buses, that so much of it is preoccupied, deep down, with bright schemes for stirring the rest of it to laughter, wonder and applause. But it is.

Let us follow the trail of an unpretentious newspaper advertisement offering "Entertainers, M.C.s, Orchestras, Film Shows for children's parties, Charity Balls, Masonic functions, staff dances, garden parties . . ." and we find ourselves, panting heavily, in a small top-floor room overlooking Charing Cross Road. Miss X is on the telephone to a vague lady in Berkshire (or Dulwich or St. Albans or Cricklewood) whose party-sated children are sick of ventriloquists and Punch and Judy and want something new this year. Miss X is full of ideas. "Why not a very funny clown, with tap-dancing? Uncle Bert is—oh, you have? Well, now, there's ventriloquism with a *parrot* . . . No? Or singing cartoonists are very popular . . . What about a dancing

conjurer with live white mice? Cats? No, I'm afraid we—oh, you've got cats, yes, I see. Of course, there's always thought-transmission and escapology; we can—I beg your pardon? No, I suppose they wouldn't. Well, why not a marionette menagerie with accordion and musical saw, and a programme of hand shadows for the little ones . . . ?"

Miss X remains calm throughout. She is a small, capable person with an Edwardian severity about dress and hair-style. Long experience in the glittering fantasy world of magicians, band leaders, ballad singers, paper-tearers, Dickens recitalists, card manipulators and lecturers on Georgian England or the History and Humour of Herbs has failed to infect her with its lovable irresponsibility; her matter-of-factness remains inviolate, her judgment unimpaired, her resourcefulness impregnable. She knows that, contrary to popular supposition, what comes out of a hat must first be put into it, and at the Monday night meetings of the Concert Artists Association she regularly sees and hears a stream of aspirants to a place on the agency's books. To Miss X they can be "pro" or "semi-pro," it doesn't matter. Are

they good, that's the question. The public is spoiled nowadays, and the impresario must be exacting. There was a time when the annual staff dinner of a lawn-mower factory would have gone into raptures over a plump baritone rendering "My Ain Folk" or "Drake's Drum"; to-day he would be expected to throw in a little eccentric dancing and handbell work, leading up to impersonations of Hollywood notabilities and topping it all off with Liszt's Second Hungarian Rhapsody played on two back-to-back pianos. The radio and television have over-educated us, that's the whole trouble.

It is a wonder, considering this rapaciousness on the part of a 1953 audience, that artists dare to offer themselves to Miss X's agency at all. But they do, and are accepted in astonishing numbers. The shelves and drawers and cupboards of her small top-floor room are spilling and cascading with glossy brochures which cry the wares of the entertainer in strikingly extrovert terms;

to glance through them is to feel amazement at the gifts of one's fellow-men. And there are other grounds for surprise. It seems strange, for example, that a song-and-dance man who has delighted more members of the nobility than most of us are ever likely to meet is prepared, for a not extortionate fee, to come and do his stuff in your humble drawing-room or mine; still stranger that another volatile spirit, said to have reminded the *Southend Times and Recorder* "of Nelson Keys and Leslie Henson in turn," and described by the *Isle of Wight County Press* as "a combination of Arthur Askey and Tommy Trinder," is less well known by name than any of that renowned quartet.

But there—what is fame? Miss X's clients have learnt by now to

gentleman whose visit to Miss X coincided with our own, though from different motives, and who later handed us an illustrated brochure describing him as an author-entertainer in humour and philosophy, explained that the word is suspect nowadays, associated in the client's mind with blue jokes, red noses and baggy trousers whose folds may well serve to conceal the family silver or Corporation plate. Comedians are out. Definitely.

In, on the other hand, are puppets, and very much so. ("Yours puppetually," a specialist signs his brochure, just to prove the show isn't stuffy.) Glove puppets, string puppets, living-face-through-hole-in-curtain puppets—they are all the rage just now; can't get enough of 'em. Every night their companies are taking off in all directions to enchant (the phrase is everywhere) children of all ages. Punch and Judy, for so long at the top of the party tree, have had to yield a little ground to new favourites, but are well in the running still, with conjurers close behind. The conjurer (or magician or illusionist, as you fancy) makes no hit at all with the female audience, it is reported, and it is tempting to wonder why. To the

on to Miss X's books. They simply had to find out, and this was the only way. They perform in evening gowns, their shapely arms fully exposed, and regularly convulse audiences with the whimsical assurance that there is nothing up their sleeves.

Miss X has her problems. Artists fall sick; have punctures, get lost in the fog; and in response to hysterical appeals from frustrated hostesses and organizers Miss X has to close her eyes and study her illuminated mental map of London and its entertainers until she recalls that a disengaged substitute lives three streets away from the disappointed address. Then there is the problem of suitable turns for unusual occasions. Supposing you get a rush order from the Argentine Ambassador, requesting two hours' diversion for a large and distinguished Spanish-speaking audience? Or another, late on New Year's Eve, for a piper to honour an important haggis? Difficult. However . . . for the Embassy, a musical Oriental conjurer, whose speciality is to work in dumb-show; for the haggis . . . well, the story begins with the telephonic pursuit of the Scots Guards from London to Windsor, and ends, just in time, in a noble and triumphant skirling.

Once the artist is engaged and briefed—patter-man, piper, magician, impersonator, puppeteer, "entertainer in humour and philosophy" or merely professional Uncle, Miss X worries no more. She has every confidence. They are all good men to come to the aid of a party.

J. B. BOOTHROYD

accept her recommendations without question. And they write gratefully afterwards (see any brochure): "Lady B— wishes to say that Mr. C—'s entertainment on the 20th was the greatest success," or, "You are a real magishun" (little girl of 8). It is only when the client, though undoubtedly delighted, thoughtlessly omits to say so, that the artist has to strike a blow for himself, and we read that a double act is "acclaimed as Britain's Most Versatile Show," or that Mr. G—"has recently earned the title of England's most adaptable COMEDY MAGICAL ENTERTAINER."

In this branch of show business there are no comedians: entertainers are as near as you can get. A

feminine mind, perhaps, curiosity too determinedly unsatisfied becomes less of an entertainment than an exasperation—and it may indeed be for this reason that a number of lady magicians (illusionistes? conjurettes?) have lately been creeping







*"It's the one luxury we permit ourselves."*

## A SLOT IN THE DARK

MANLEY and Clara waited for the captain in the foyer. There was a general murk outside the theatre and people dived into the light with relief. The Manleys were crammed into a corner. Manley felt bleak. He had not seen a pantomime for fifteen years.

"I believe," he said, in a scholarly voice, "that glass slipper was, as a matter of fact, a mistranslation. Whoever heard of a slipper being made of glass? If you take the trouble to think about it, it's not likely that it would be a comfortable form of footwear, is it?"

Clara was craning round people. "A mistranslation from what?" she asked.

"Norwegian," said Manley promptly, not knowing the answer. Clara suspected this, he knew, but let it go.

"You think a glass slipper's unlikely?" she said.

"For example," Manley said, "how would it bend? How——"

"Well, what about a pumpkin being changed into a stage-coach?" Clara said, turning to him. "Do you think *that's* likely?"

"It's a different point," said Manley, hotly. "It's only by having all the normal things normal that the abnormal is abnormal." It sounded well, he thought, and his spirits rose.

"You're the only man I know," said Clara, admiringly, "who can talk that kind of sentence and make it sound as if it means something."

The captain's burly figure approached through the crush. He had his beret on the back of his head and was frowning ferociously about for them. Dragging behind came all three of the treasures, linked together like a chain.

"Can't be dashing about," the captain said. "Unity, that's what. All for one and one for all. One on a zebra, all on a zebra. Penalty for letting go, one with a table tennis bat. Sentence carried out as and when." He was uneasy in the crowd and kept hopping about from one

leg to the other. The treasures were wide-eyed. Manley took out the tickets.

"Advance in line," said the captain. "Objective, dress circle. Hands held till I give the word." Manley and Clara brought up the rear. The treasures went up the stairs, got out of position and scooped up people like a mine-sweeper.

"No panic!" bawled the captain. "Calmness essential. Wheel, wheel!" He had taken off his beret. Beads of sweat were standing out on his forehead. He started to apologize to everyone in sight. A crowd formed behind him.

Manley finally extricated them into the theatre and their seats. The captain mopped his brow. The treasures began to rummage in a box of chocolates that Clara had brought.

"Smashing!" they cried. "Hard centres! Super!"

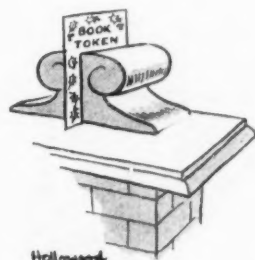
Manley leaned towards the captain. "When you think of it, a glass slipper's rather absurd," he said. "I believe it's a mistranslation from the original story."

The captain was studying the programme assiduously. "Greck," he said.

"Oh, was it?" said Manley, surprised. "I thought it was Scandinavian."

"Greck to me," the captain said. "Buttons. Who's this man Buttons? Don't remember him. Ugly sisters, fairy godmother, yes. Buttons, no."

"He's a page boy," Clara said.



"Daft," said the captain firmly. "Girl didn't live in an hotel. Far from it, as I understand it. Have lifts in it next. Four-course meals. Where's the fireplace then, eh?" He came across a picture of the principal boy and gazed at it approvingly.

"Fine figure of a woman," he said. He leaned forward to focus the stage.

"Long way," he said, banging on the back of the female treasure who was choking on a chocolate. "Don't gulp." He looked round. "Artificial aid needed."

"It's all right," Manley said, reassuringly. "Just gone down the wrong way, that's all."

"To see," said the captain. "Should have brought field-glasses."

"They've got them in front of you," Clara hissed, as the curtain went up. "Sixpence. You put it in the slot."

Manley heard the clink of a coin. The captain was staring, fascinated, at the stage, fumbling to open the catch which held the binoculars.

"Odd," he said under his breath. "Never can tell. What's the dodge?"

"The catch flies up," Manley whispered. The captain's head went down into the gloom between the seats. He grunted a few times. Manley went down, too, and put his head alongside the captain's in the dark. "No go," the captain said. He thumped on the metal box. "Only thing to do," he said. "Always works. Tube tickets the same. Just a minute."

He gave a series of jarring raps on the box, then stuck his head over the seat in front.

"Beg pardon, madam," he said. "Mechanical thing. Right in a jiffy. Hold tight." His head went down again. A paralyzing thump descended. The woman in front leapt up with a little scream.

"Not so hard," Manley said. The captain's face was near his. "Personal matter," he whispered hoarsely. "Challenge. Put my sixpence in. Under obligation for a

look through the glasses. Probably signed a contract as good as."

Clara was frowning down at them.

"Where did you put the sixpence?" Manley asked, after a few more thuds.

"What a thing to ask," the captain panted. "Slot at the back. Where else?"

Manley struck a match. "The slot at the front," he said, with his mouth to the captain's ear. "The slot at the back's the hole for the hinge."

The captain started back. "Apologies in order," he said. "Wrong hole. Quite agreed. Natural error, you'll have to admit." He poked his head up and shot a look

at the stage, then came back to the gloom. "Looks a good show," he said. "Problem here, though. Concentration essential. How to get the sixpence out."

"Fish for it," Manley said. "Got a penknife?"

"No," said the captain. "I'll get one from the little gifts. Always carry emergency stores." He straightened up and returned with a knife.

"Keep striking matches," he said sternly. "Must have light. Watch out for the coin. Have it out in no time, I expect."

Manley struck match after match, burning his fingers. The treasures were singing the choruses and bawling with laughter.

"Fine evening," said the captain, wrestling through a series of metallic chinks. "Enjoying it, you know. Does 'em good. Shan't see much, I'm afraid, myself. Only sixpence, admitted. Still, don't like to be beaten." The wrestling went on for some time. Clara was now ignoring them and laughing mirthlessly at every joke from the stage. Manley was dreading the interval. She would be cool, he knew, and reasonable, a thing which she managed to make hostile.

The captain gave up struggling, breathing hard. "Conference," he said. Muttering, they got down on their knees, letting the seats tilt up behind them. "More room to work," the captain said. "Necessary. Matches lasting out?"

"They're getting a bit low," Manley said.

"Drastic measures called for," the captain said. "Time has come. Only one thing to do. Unscrew the whole lot. Expend the matches

only for screw location, right? Half a minute." He popped up again to have a look at the stage. "It really is a good show," he said seriously. "However. On with the operation."

Manley struck another match and the captain inserted the penknife into a screwhole. His shoulders came down and the penknife broke. Half the blade went flying away. The captain let out a wild yell and sucked madly at his fingers. The woman in front rose aggressively through repeated cries of "Sh!". Simultaneously a torch flashed along the row and picked them out on their knees.

"Anything wrong?" an usherette's voice asked.

They picked themselves up sheepishly and the curtain came down on the end of Act I. The lights went up. Surrounded by indignant faces the captain was wrapping a handkerchief in a great ball round his hand.

"Nothing, madam," he said. "Quite the reverse. Lost a penknife, that's all. Nothing to worry about. Sloping floor, and so on. Difficult. Ruin the show. Quite see that."

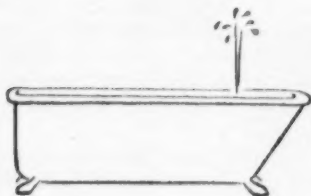
They escaped, hauling the treasures with them and bought ice-cream.

"Super!" the treasures cried, smearing it round their mouths. "Choc-bars! Smashing!"

Manley was trying to avoid Clara's eye. The captain, aggrieved, nursed his hand.

When they went back, Clara leaned over, put a sixpence in the right slot, took out the binoculars and the captain's sixpence and handed them to him.

During the second act, Manley thought, she was really laughing.





## IT WARMS YOU TWICE

"YOU stop still and saw wood," wrote Abraham Lincoln to somebody (or, maybe, somebody to Abraham Lincoln) during one of the former's (or, by the brackets, the latter's) election campaigns. Or was it Artemus Ward? It is a little disheartening to a writer endeavouring to plunge headforemost into the heart of his subject to be plagued with such self-questionings as he gallops along the springboard. It is the price one pays, I suppose, for unswerving fidelity to the truth. Likewise, the author of the saying about cutting one's own wood, to whom I am indebted for my title, may have been Thoreau, Benjamin Franklin or even George Washington. It is sufficiently clear, at all events, that many eminent Americans were addicted to wood-cutting, and considered the exercise beneficial and even, in some obscure way, morally uplifting.

No man can saw the same log twice. That apophthegm is my own, though its derivation is classical, and it reminds me (one has time to be reminded of many things while severing an eight-inch tree-trunk) of what Black Bill said to the stranger who asked him if he could herd sheep. Black Bill, who could "tend bar, salt mines, lecture, float stock, do a little middle-weight slugging, and play the piano," responded: "Do you mean *have* I heard sheep?" Perhaps the joke was not one of O. Henry's best, but I find it lingers in the memory. Thus on my wife's asking me, a little while ago, when I proposed to saw some more logs, I was able to reply like a flash: "I seen some only yesterday." But I might as well have saved my breath.

To my mind the worst feature of wood-sawing is the repetitive nature of the task. No sooner does one log separate itself from the parent mass and fall with a dull clonk on the sawyer's slippered foot than the necessity of beginning all over again must somehow be faced. I came down into this cellar (how long ago I hesitate to guess—there is no means of distinguishing night from day down here) with the intention of cutting half a dozen logs, to last for the evening and leave one or two over for to-morrow. I see now that this programme was over-ambitious: something like a climber proposing to do the peaks of Lhotse, Nuptse and Everest on the

same afternoon. Another way of looking at the matter would be to compare my present situation to that of the hapless girl in the fairy-tale who was locked into a room with a pile of straw which she was required to spin into gold by the following morning. Nor is there any likelihood of a Rumpelstiltskin taking over the saw from me. There is, in fact, only one line of action that offers any possibilities at all . . .

"My dear lady," I said, keeping one hand behind my back, "if by any chance you should happen to have perused, in your childhood, the *Boys' Budget* for 1924, or thereabouts, you may recollect a curious and not unapt piece of information therein contained. "Paleface heap fool" (I quote from memory), "Paleface heap fool," says the Redskin, "build um big fire and can't get near it." The Redskin builds a small fire and sits close to it." I put it to you that the quantity of wood I have here" (at this point I produced the log) "is sufficient, providing we sit within three feet or so of the hearth, to warm . . ."

So here I am back in the cellar, working away like a middle-aged beaver in poor muscular condition. If we may return for a moment to Black Bill (whose creator, in the opinion of many good judges, had a gift for story-telling unequalled by the present writer), it is interesting to note the reason he gave for abandoning his job as a sheep-herder. "Every week half of the beans was wormy," declared Black Bill, "and not nigh enough wood in camp." There was no one to point out to him that if he had gone out and cut his own wood it would have warmed him—oh, I said that before, did I?

G. D. R. DAVIES

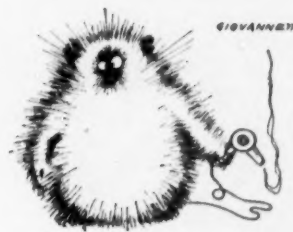
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## EPIGRAM

*Homo Sap*

UNLIKE wild duck I cannot fly,  
Skeining the satin of the sky;  
But I can do what duck can not—  
Decoy them and then shoot the lot.

JUSTIN RICHARDSON



## SNURLING

ON the blackboard I write "Hibernating Animals" in the laborious copperplate it has taken years to acquire.

"We must start without Patrick and Abraham," I say. "I can't think where they can be."

The children copy the heading into their nature books, with the usual scufflings and tongue-writhings.

"Miss," says Ernest virtuously, "your writing 's come out pink."

It has too. I know, and Ernest also knows, why this is. The sticks of chalk are left on the massive inkstand, in which yawn two enormous open wells, one red and one blue. Between them arches a pound and a half of solid brass handle. It is an imposing structure, meant to add dignity to the post of headmistress. The open ink-wells are a source of constant temptation to unattended children, who dip the tips of the chalk in and watch it suck up the ink in the most delectable manner. It is, of course, forbidden, which adds to the fearful joy.

"Get on, Ernest," I say squashing, "and don't make trouble."

He turns back to his book with a martyred sigh.

"Can anyone tell me an animal that goes to sleep for the winter?" I begin briskly.

"Cow?" suggests Anne.

"Pigs?" says Richard.

"If you listen," I say, with justifiable irritation, "you can hear Mr. Henry's pigs and cows at this moment; and here we are in the depths of winter. Think!"

There is a pained silence. When the class is cudgelling its brains the door bursts open, and Abraham and Patrick appear in a swirl of icy mist, sniffing happily.

"Where have you been?"

"Us 'as been snurling."

"Snurling?"

"Yes, miss. For Mr. Henry, miss."

"Do you mean snailing?"

"Yes, miss."

"Then say so. 'Snailing!'"

"Sneeling!" minces Abraham,

in a tone of ghastly refinement. I let it pass.

"Mr. Henry gives us sixpence a 'undred. Pat and me started for him in the summer. We snurls his box edgings for him. They likes box, snurls does—don't they, Pat?" He nudges Patrick fiercely.

"Yes," jerks out Patrick.

Abraham produces a three-penny bit as justification. Patrick follows suit with a mixed collection of damp coppers.

"Put them on my desk," I direct, "and hurry up with your nature work."

They add their treasures to the drawing-pins, beads, raffia needles and paper-clips that jostle in the generous groove of the inkstand, and clatter to their desks.

This refreshing interlude has brightened the class considerably, and "Dormice," "Squirrels" and "Hedgehogs" are put up on the blackboard. As I write—with the white end of the chalk—I ponder this snailing expedition. Something, somewhere, doesn't quite fit.

"Snakes!" shouts Richard, and now I know what has been puzzling me. Snails hibernate too.

I call Patrick and Abraham to my desk as the others work.

"Abraham," I begin, "does Mr. Henry give you this money for keeping his box hedge free from snails? Or can you get the snails anywhere in his garden?"

"He only said us was to do the box," he answers sullenly, looking at the floor.

"Did you find to-day's hundred in the box hedge?"

"Ain't no snurls there now," he mutters.

"Where did you get them then?"

No answer from Abraham, but Patrick gulps and says, breathlessly, "They 's all stuck in lumps, miss, up the corner of the pig sty. And Abraham found whole nestses of 'em under a duck-board. They goes there, out of the box 'edge, winter time. Us gets 'em with a shovel."

"And does Mr. Henry know this? Or does he think you are

spending a long time working along the box hedge?"

Abraham raises innocent eyes to the pitch-pine ceiling.

"Couldn't say," he says airily. "Not honest-like."

"Not honest," Abraham, I say wrathfully, "is exactly right! You haven't lied directly to Mr. Henry, and you didn't lie directly to me just now when you talked about snailing in the box. But you have behaved deceitfully, both times—and you know it!"

I pause for breath, and notice that I have an open-mouthed audience of eighteen children. Abraham remains unmoved, but Patrick twists a jacket button round and round unhappily.

"But old Henry——" he begins.

"Mr. Henry," please, Patrick."

"Well, 'e just said 'Sixpence a 'undred snurls—din' 'e, Abe?"

"Mr. Henry will probably go on paying you sixpence. The point is that he may not know that for six months of the year you are getting them by the shovelful, and, in any case, you are not working where he has particularly asked you to."

I flatter myself that Abraham is now beginning to look a trifle crestfallen.

"You understand," I say sternly, pressing home the attack, "that you are to tell Mr. Henry where you are collecting the snails. Then it is up to him to decide whether he employs you or not. Now go and get on with your nature list."

They retire, and I pick up the chalk, making sure that the working end will be white.

"Any more for the list?" I ask.

"Squirrels!" says John eagerly.

I point significantly to the board.

"Frogs!" says Peter. I write it up.

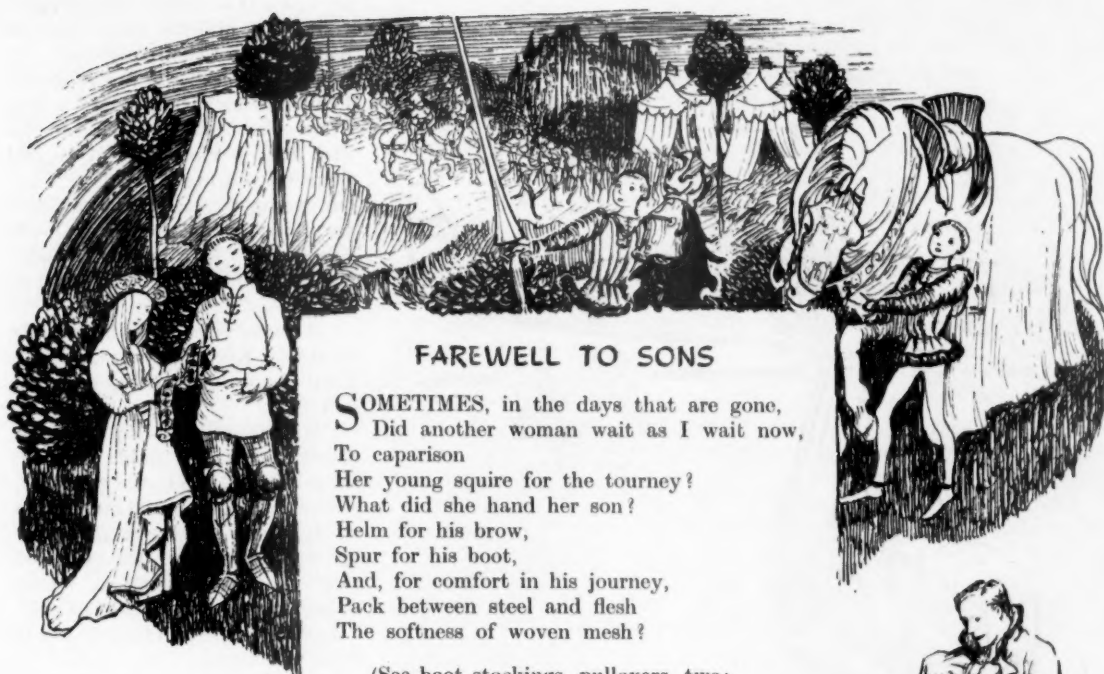
"Squirrels!" calls out some fathead.

"We've had more than enough squirrels," I say shortly.

To my surprise, Abraham raises a polite, if murky, hand.

"What about snurls?" he coos. His eyes are round and innocent, his manner ingratiating. "Ain't 'ad much about them this afternoon."

D. J. SAINT



## FAREWELL TO SONS

SOMETIMES, in the days that are gone,  
Did another woman wait as I wait now,  
To caparison  
Her young squire for the tourney?  
What did she hand her son?  
Helm for his brow,  
Spur for his boot,  
And, for comfort in his journey,  
Pack between steel and flesh  
The softness of woven mesh?

(Sea-boot stockings, pullovers, two;  
Now for the flying suit;  
Tuggings and heavings, clips  
Tightened; and zips.)



Sometimes, in the days that are gone,  
Did another fret silently as I fret now,  
Dwelling upon  
The length and the dark of the road,  
The hobgoblins waiting her son?  
Premonition furrow her brow  
As she thought of the weight of the load  
His young frame bore?  
And, of course,  
That other worry, his horse.

(Fur-lined flying boots, fur-lined coat,  
Scarf round the throat,  
Balaclava, helmet, gloves, all this—  
What is there more?  
His cold young parting kiss.)

Sometimes, in the days that are gone,  
Did another woman strain and wait to hear  
The last of her son?  
The creaking, primitive gear  
Of the falling bridge, the clatter  
Of hooves on cobblestones fading away?

(The motor-bike wakes with the noisy splutter  
Of a cold engine on a dank night;  
Nothing more to say.  
The cold rain falls in a chilly spatter,  
The engine-throb fades to a distant mutter,  
Grant he travel aright!)







### MONUMENT FIVE-FIFTY

**R**ECONSTRUCTING (I began, stretching my feet out to the fire) or harking back, the affair properly took shape when they had finished opening and shutting the doors until coat-tails and things had been cleared, and those actually in the train had time to look round. I had started work on that word-picture puzzle among the advertisements, timing myself on the wrist-watch of a man in front of me whose arm had been jammed across the shoulder of a woman in a green hat. Imagine (are you listening? I asked my wife) imagine my surprise when I felt someone tapping gently on my cheek with the brim of his hat. I moved my eyes round and stared into eyes six inches away. The tail

of mine told me that he was no ordinary—or regular—traveller. For instance, convulsions below indicated that he was trying to free his arms—maybe even his legs; that he had not known enough to take a deep breath before being swept in; and that he had not learnt to “drift” with the crowd. I had the impression, too, that he had not got both feet on the ground.

He said hoarsely—not in the pitiful tone of someone begging help but in the despairing voice of a man announcing an inevitability: “I say, I’ve dropped my ticket.”

“Well,” I suggested, “you have two alternatives: (a) to travel on until the terminus is reached and you have freedom to search for it, or

(b) to alight at your destination, tell your story, and put yourself in the hands of the ticket collector.”

As he considered my proposals I could see high cheek-bones, a deep five-o’clock shadow, and a collar that had obviously been tugged frequently during a hard day. Then our eyes met again and he regarded me thoughtfully, the panic slowly subsiding. “As a matter of fact,” and he tried to shrug his shoulders, “I feel . . .”

A husky voice broke in, genially enough: “Keep it in your hat-band. Then you’ve got to lose your hat first, see?”

My friend flushed slightly. Mouths began to speak from all sides. The woman in the green hat, although she had to address the dark window, said “I always keep mine just inside my glove. Then you find that . . .” A student in a long coloured scarf muttered, indistinctly, “Between the teeth’s the best place. Then you can’t . . .”

“That’s all very well”—my friend, comforted by sympathy, was regaining his poise—“but I must confess . . .”

What he was going to confess I never heard. Unbraced as he was against any fixture of the compartment, his sudden disappearance with the tide when the doors abruptly opened was inevitable. I caught a quick glimpse of him once, turning slowly and helplessly, as a tyro might turn, Pickwick-like, on a slide. I was sorry. I had just thought of a third plan for resurrecting his ticket.

And so (I wound up, lighting my pipe) we have to envisage a man racked . . .

(What, asked my wife suddenly, is that sticking in the turn-up of your left trouser?)

FERGUSON MACLAY

§ §

### DILEMMA

THE children want to see *The Muffin Show*,

But Rattigan’s the man for me. So now we have to choose between the Vau-

Deville and *The Deep Blue Sea*.

## PILOT OF THE POOLS

VII

*The Puddles (continued)*

WE were discussing, my lords, the fantastic "Penny Pools" in which many thousands of pounds can be won for a penny. Our high moral purpose this morning is to put you off this particular method of breadwinning. For hardly any bread, it seems to us, is worth so much toil and trouble.

In (1) the Penny Points Pool there are five prizes, a great attraction, though the fifth prize is rather a baby. You have to predict correctly the results of 14 matches: but it is worse than that. Note this cruel arrangement. A Draw, you will remember, Class, counts 3 points, an Away win 2, and a Home win 1. Your score in this barbarous Pool is governed not by the number of results you get right but by the number of points you lose on the ones you get wrong. You might get 12 of the 14 results right (though after a year's experience we find this inconceivable): but if the two you get wrong happen to be Draws you lose 6 points. Another chap might get four wrong: but if they were all Homes (1) he would lose only 4 points and get a fifth prize. We call this madly unjust: but there it is.

(2) The Penny Results is a more civilized Pool. There are only 12 matches (yes, my lord, only!): there are three prizes, or rather "dividends": and we ourselves once raked in £1 2s 0d for getting 10 results right.

We really hesitate to mention the Block Perm System, my lord, for it requires such inhuman exertions; but it can be used in both these pools, and, we suspect, is used by many of the unimaginable wizards who win. This would be a miniature Block Perm, covering six matches—look:

	(A)	Result
House of Lords	1 2 ×	2
House of Commons	2 × 1	×
Royal Exchange	2 2 1	1
Trinity House	2 × 2	(C) 2
Tate Gallery	1 × 1	1
Oxford Street	1 1	1

(3 × 3 × 2) = 18 lines

(NOTE that here, to ascertain the number of lines—and pennies—we

multiply horizontally, not vertically as before.) Any line in any block can be used with any line in the others. Here, you see, you lucky bishop, the six figures in black type give you a winning line. Well, you might use such a device for the "Simple Six" Pool, though there the minimum stake is 6d. not a penny, and 18 lines will cost you 9/- at least. But something much more fierce is needed to attack that frowning fortress of 14 matches in the Penny Points. Here, my lord, is a comforting 9 × 9 Block Perm (using no Bankers and costing only 6/9d). But can you imagine writing all those figures and tadpoles down—and, what is more, doing it again on your copy sheet in squares smaller still? Yet there are men, my lord, who endure this kind of toil every week—and shallow moralists cry "Something for Nothing."

	(A)	Result
Swindon	2 1 2 2 2 1 2 2 1	2
Temple Bar	× 2 × × 2 × 2 × ×	×
Royal Academy	1 2 2 2 2 1 2 1 2	1
Bow and Bromley	1 2 2 1 2 2 1 2 2	1
Kens. High St.	2 2 1 2 1 2 2 2 1	2
British Museum	1 1 2 2 1 1 1 2 1	1

	(B)	Result
T.U.C.	× 1 × × × 1 × × 1	×
The Times	2 1 2 2 1 2 1 2 2	1
Eastleigh	1 2 2 2 2 1 2 1 2	2
Royal Geog. Soc.	2 1 1 2 1 1 2 1 1	2
Loce	1 1 × 1 × 1 × 1 ×	×
Tate Gallery	2 2 1 1 2 2 2 1 2	2
		23

Something for nothing indeed! Now write somewhere, my lord, Block Perm—9 × 9 = 81 lines = 6/9d. staked: and your ship, to all intents and purposes, is home.

Well, we are blessed, my lord bishop. Look—you have done it again! You may couple any vertical line in either block with any line in the other. We think we told you that there are 4,782,969 different ways of predicting the results of 14 matches: but you have cleverly chosen the only correct one (line 1, Block A, with line 7, Block B). Well done.

But there may be more. The total possible points, you see, is 23, and 19 will get a fifth prize. Have a hunt, my lord, for minor prizes. Your correct results in line B 5, for example, give you 11 points. Add them to line A 1—10 points—and you have 21 points, a third prize. There are probably a few more pickings to be had, but we are exhausted. Do it yourself.

Do not ask us, my lord, how or why we put those particular symbols in those particular places. We copied them from one of the Sunday papers, and you may be sure that there is a jolly good scientific basis somewhere.

But the truth is that about half-way through a generous block perm like that you cease to care whether there is a scientific basis or not. The only urge is to get the sickening thing done. Many, we believe, are driven mad by so many 1's and 2's



and  $\times$ 's and, in psychological self-defence, start popping in y's, %'s, and £'s. Disqualified, of course. Personally, on the rare occasions when we feel fit enough to attempt a spacious Block Perm, we find that the only relief is to do the thing in colour. We have red 1's, blue 2's and (since white ink is not very effective) yellow  $\times$ 's. This makes the sheet look very gay.

Nevertheless, we have a feeling that after all we have said, bishop, you may tend to avoid the "inexpensive" Penny Puddles—and you may be right.

But you may well be drawn towards some of the soft-seeming seductive little Puddles like the "Simple Six," or the "Family Four." Beware of these, my lord. In the early days, no doubt, these puddles were seriously intended as easy exercises for Granny and Mummy. But then the scientific fellows came in with their perms, and now these cosy little Puddles are concocted by the Fiend already referred to, horrid little mixtures of uncertain events. The "Simple Six" has become so

difficult that it yields now and then a dividend of £30, £40 or £50 (for a shilling).

You may, of course, attack this valuable little citadel with perms, but your expenses, my lord, will bound up again. You may do this, for example:

Swindon	2 $\times$	2
Tate Gallery	1 $\times$	$\times 2 = 4$
Hyde Park	2 Banker	
Royal Society	2 Banker	$\times 2 = 8$
Putney	1 2	
House of Lords	2 $\times$	$\times 2 = 16$

Perm 2 Bankers with 4 2-way matches.  
16 lines at 1/-, 16/-.

But that, you see, at a shilling a line, will cost you 16 shillings; both your Bankers will probably turn out to be 1's, and even your two-way matches may easily go wrong.

Well, you may say, my lord, if the competition is so difficult, and the prize so high, why should I not do something in the nature of an odds-on bet—indeed, why should I not bet on a certainty, and have six 3-way matches? That would look like this:

Swindon	1 2 $\times$	3
Tate Gallery	1 2 $\times$	$\times 3 = 9$
Hyde Park	1 2 $\times$	$\times 3 = 27$
Royal Society	1 2 $\times$	$\times 3 = 81$
Putney	1 2 $\times$	$\times 3 = 243$
House of Lords	1 2 $\times$	$\times 3 = 729$

Perm. 6 3-way matches—  
 $3 \times 3 \times 3 \times 3 \times 3 \times 3 = 729$  lines.

You have there, my lord, cleverly covered every possible contingency. You must be right. The trouble is that 729 lines, at 1/- each, comes to £36 9s. 0d., and even at 6d. this perm would cost £18 4s. 6d. There are many weeks in which that might be a profitable though dangerous wager: but the trouble is, you are not allowed to spend more than £10 0s. 0d. in any one week. Aren't they devils?

We have given you this fanciful picture, my lord, chiefly to show you how any perm likely to be at all effective mounts up—how tempting and how expensive it is. The Royal Commission of 1949–1951, who were not wildly against the Pools, did recommend that "No entry containing an *abbreviated permutation* should be included in a pool."

You will see now, my lord, what they meant. The most leisured bishop—or, shall we say, retired admiral—would hardly think of

writing out those 729 lines in full, even if there were room on the sheet. So he would spend much less money. That is the suggestion and, no doubt, there is something in it. Whether, on the other hand, it would be a foul curtailment of the liberty of the subject is a question which we shall not now discuss; but we can imagine a jolly discussion in Standing Committee A of the House of Commons about it.

The Pool Promoters themselves, by the way, have made a small anti-perm gesture. There is now a 10-Results No Perm Pool. This is the opportunity for (a) the poor man and (b) the expert, for neither great wealth nor cunning mathematics will avail: nor, we are persuaded, is the pin much use. You have to write down correctly the result of 10 matches (selected not by you but by the Fiend). How this is done we cannot explain: indeed we cannot imagine. But it is. And rightly it wins great rewards. The other day the first prize was £4,000—for a shilling. That does not happen every week, my lord. But you never know. Have a go.

There is also a rather odious little Pool called the Points Draw. To get top-marks in this fantastic competition you have to select not merely five matches which end in Draws (no mean feat in itself) but five matches which are also Draws at half-time—inconceivable my lord, is it not? Yet, my lord, most weeks the inconceivable is done by some simple citizen like you and me, and he is well rewarded—the other day it was £3,448. About this Pool, my lord, we have no special advice to offer. You can choose five Draws, of course, by one or more of the scientific methods described in an earlier lecture; but how you arrange for them to be Draws at half-time too, we simply do not know.

A. P. H.



"What has the great Beaver to fear? What has he to hide that might be dragged to light at the meeting of the General Council of the Press? Echo answers why and what?"—*Daily Mail*  
You can't keep a good echo down.





*"I said it's astonishing how quiet these resorts are in the winter."*

## KISMET

I REMEMBER once, at the time of the Indus floods,  
There was one old woman we tried in vain to  
persuade  
To shift her bits and abandon her mud-walled house,  
To move, and at once, if she did not want to be dead.  
"Look now, mother," we said,

"The water cannot be stopped. It may not come  
As far as this, but the chances are that it may;  
And if it comes, everything will be lost,  
The river may be roof-high by the end of the  
day.  
What good can it do to stay?"

But she, sitting hunched up on her string-worked  
bed,  
Brown hands folded and thin face woefully lined,  
Pursed her lips, and shivered, and shook her head,  
And would not move. "It is God's will," she whined,  
Maddeningly resigned.

The brash young Naik Tahsildar clicked his tongue;  
Speaking in English over the hopeless head,

"These people, sir, they will not help themselves.  
They think there is no use to try," he said,  
Smiling, with hands outspread.

"They haven't the guts," I said (but to myself);  
"Making every allowance for age and fright,  
Can you imagine anybody at home  
Folding their hands in the face of superior might,  
And not putting up a fight?"

Yesterday morning the daily woman appeared  
With her rich red face set in a worried frown.  
"To tell you the truth, I'm all upset," she said.  
"The people have been," she said, "from the New  
Town.  
The house has got to come down."

"Surely they'll find you a flat or something?" I said.  
"Oh," she said, "they've offered me one or two—  
Top of the hill and more than double the rent.  
And I'm fond of the house, of course, though it  
isn't new.  
But there's nothing no one can do."

P. M. HUBBARD

## AN OLD FAMILIAR FACE

MY mother wrote and said she had found a nice friend for me. It was Dottie Marlow, who had been in my form at school. Her home was at Hither Whichingham and she had a job in London like me. My mother and her mother made the tea together last Wednesday when the Wether Bilbury Ladies' Bowling Club played the Hither Whichingham Ladies on their home ground and she was an extremely nice woman. My mother was very surprised. The last time Dottie's mother spoke to my mother she cut her dead at a school Speech Day and my mother swore she would never speak to her again.

But they had got on famously at the match, and Dottie's mother gave my mother Dottie's London address for me. She showed my mother Dottie's photograph, and she had turned out such a pretty girl. My mother would hardly have recognized her. Get in touch with her, my mother said, but remember that everything you say will be repeated in the village by her mother.

I wrote back and said I remembered Dottie Marlow very well and I didn't want her for a friend. I already had some nice friends.

My mother wrote back and said what was the matter with poor Dottie? She had been a very nice little girl when I knew her and very polite. My mother remembered when we were about ten how she had offered to wash up when she came to tea. Very different from me. The only time I used to offer to help was when my mother was too busy. I must have liked Dottie then or I wouldn't have invited her.

I could argue till I was blue in the face if I wanted to, but my mother knew very well what kind of friends I had. She could tell by my expression when I met some of the nice people in the village at home. My mother went quite cold sometimes when she read the Sunday newspapers, artists, for instance, and actors. And scientists, possibly, although they were steadier notwithstanding rocket-ships and all this Mars nonsense. We would all be better off if they left Mars where it was and got on with quicker eggs and higher kitchen sinks. My mother was unable to understand why a man who could invent going to Mars couldn't invent a higher kitchen sink. Dottie had a savings account and she

saved something *every week*. Nobody was going to get my mother into a rocket-ship and send her off to Mars without a struggle.

I wrote back and said that the memory of Dottie coming to tea was one of my darkest. She had come solely on my mother's invitation, which returned Dottie's mother's invitation to me the previous week, which returned my mother's invitation to Dottie to my Christmas party. Dottie and I had hated each other and I was beginning to hate her now. And it might interest my mother to know that I, too, had made my offer of help to Dottie's mother who had then said that Dottie *never* helped at home. My friends were all perfectly normal, which was more than could be said for some of the residents of Wether Bilbury.

My mother wrote back and said how *could* I say that about the people in Wether Bilbury? Didn't I ever want to settle down and lead a sane, normal life with a garden or would I be content for ever to smoke myself to death in slacks with people she hoped my aunts would never meet? Dottie was a charming girl; a clever, steady, sensible girl. She was a hospital almoner and it was the sort of sane thing my mother would have liked to be able to talk about my doing. Even Katy Henblow had married a doctor now, did I know that?

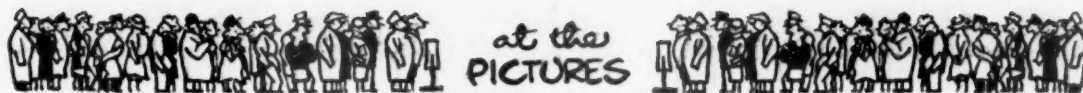
I wrote back and said I loathed Dottie Marlow and once and for all I was *not* going to write to her.

My mother wrote back and said *quite right, too!* Did I know what had happened? She had met Dottie's mother on Monday when she was wearing her new coat that my father thought he had chosen, and Dottie's mother had admired it. Then they met again on Thursday and Dottie's mother had bought one *exactly like it on purpose!* And before my mother had a chance to do it first she cut my mother dead and my mother was never going to speak to her again. So, my mother concluded, if *ever* I made the *slightest* attempt to get in touch with Dottie she'd never forgive me! Never!

MARJORIE RIDDELL



"Poor old Mum and Dad! What a miserable way to spend an evening."

*Les Jeux Interdits—Cops and Robbers*

**T**RAVELLERS to Film Festivals have seen *The Secret Game*, or *Les Jeux Interdits* (Director: RENÉ CLÉMENT), already, but this is its first appearance in London. It is a classically brilliant story of childhood in the war, beautifully done in all departments. Most of its point depends on the

*[Les Jeux Interdits]*

Michel (aged 11)—GEORGES POUJOULY  
Paulette (aged 5)—BRIGITTE FOSSEY

playing of the two children in the principal parts; they seem miraculously good, but the director can take most of the credit for this, for one of them, the more important, is only five years old. BRIGITTE FOSSEY appears as an infant who, after her parents are killed among the refugees on the road from Paris in 1940, is taken in for a time by a family of peasant farmers. Without going into elaborate detail it is impossible to convey how natural seems the "secret game" that the little girl begins to play with the eleven-year-old son of the house (GEORGES POUJOULY): a game involving their own miniature cemetery, in which they bury any small dead creatures they are able to acquire, placing on the graves

crosses taken (with unfortunate results) from the real cemetery. This is the heart of the story and brings the action to a climax, but it is throughout connected with, explained by, moments of the child's abnormal experience so that it arises with inevitable logic out of the circumstances of the time. At intervals the emphasis shifts and we get such a scene as the harshly amusing one in the (official) cemetery when a brawl starts over one of the missing crosses; this difference of mood has been criticized, but it seems to me a correct adjustment of balance, making the children's solemn pretence more effective by contrast. (For that matter, their activities are not a pretence: it is quite clear that they have serious and to them reasonable motives.) This is a wonderfully good and attractive film, and no one should be deterred from seeing it by any idea that it must be "harrowing" because of the details of its subject. The children alone would be worth watching; but, in fact, almost every moment is satisfying to eye, ear and intelligence.

*Cops and Robbers* is really another foreign film, the original Italian version of which was directed by MARIO MONICELLI and STENO; but it would be pointless to give the original title, for it has been re-edited and dubbed into English, and the English dialogue directed, by W. DE LANE LEA. Many simple souls will see it and enjoy it without even realizing it is dubbed, for I have never known dubbing better done than this; the skill and perseverance required, from the writing of the new dialogue to the final recording, were obviously stupendous; but I'm not converted. I have seen bitter articles implying that all objection to dubbed films is inspired by a determination on the part of expensively-educated intellectuals to do the monolingual poor man out of enjoyment he might

otherwise get, but the idea that anybody would actually prefer to see a dubbed version of a film rather than the original version with titles, even if the original language were Sanskrit, even if it were a language nobody had ever heard of, is incomprehensible to me. (No, not quite—I'm reminded that an increasing number of people don't bother to learn to read properly; but whose fault is that?) About this picture it only remains to say that it is a comic duel between a comic fat policeman and a comic thin thief, and that much of the fun comes over. The dumb-show fun comes over perfectly.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Survey**

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

In London, there are still *Miracolo a Milano* (10/12/52) and *Les Sept Péchés Capitaux* (24/12/52) and that bit of entertaining nonsense *The Crimson Pirate* (7/1/53).

Releases include *Top Secret* (3/12/52), a political satire with some good, and plenty of cheap, laughs; and *The Steel Trap*, an excellent suspense-story.

RICHARD MALLET

*[Cops and Robbers]*

Sergeant Bottoni—FABRIZI  
Ferdinando Esposito—TOTO





## AT THE PLAY



*King Richard II* (LYRIC, HAMMERSMITH)—*The Man* (HER MAJESTY'S)

ACCORDING to Mr. LOUDON SAINTHILL, who has designed the Hammersmith décor, "fair King Richard's land" is uncommonly spruce and well-ordered. Everybody at the Lyric, Hammersmith, is bandbox-fresh, among the best-dressed men-about-town; and we judge from the model sets that *Richard* plays at being king of the castle. It does not seem to be a very plausible presentation of the fierce tournament of the Middle Ages; but then few have ever pretended that *Richard the Second* is especially persuasive as history. What we do know is that it is a magnificent play for the ear. Thanks to the *Richard* of Mr. PAUL SCOFIELD and to the direction of Mr. GIELGUD, who understands as much about the chronicle as any man in our theatre, the ear is not disappointed.

A colleague has implied, surprisingly, that this *Richard* is without pathos. To me he is all pathos. There is no need, for once, to bother ourselves too much about C. E. Montague's famous picture of the artist-king luxuriating in each new grief. Mr. SCOFIELD, from the



(*King Richard II*)  
*Richard II*—MR. PAUL SCOFIELD

Welsh scenes to Pomfret, presents a young man who rules, so he must believe, by divine right, and who is stricken deeply by the loss of his crown. The actor does not let *Richard* wallow in self-pity. He does move us—or some of us—profoundly by his simple treatment of the great speeches. Without breaking up the verse, Mr. SCOFIELD can define each word: note his control in the Coventry speech beginning "Draw near," which is a challenge to any player's diction. He fails in pathos—and this is odd—only in the farewell to his Queen. True, he cannot get us to accept the change in *Richard's* character between Ely House and the Welsh shore: that must always be a test for any actor.

Others are no more than a frame for the King. The *Bolingbroke* (Mr. ERIC PORTER) usurps rather tamely; and Mr. BREWSTER MASON comes off best as *Northumberland*, a glum and unclubbable type. Mr. HERBERT LOMAS, normally my heart's delight, is throttling *Gaunt's* blank verse; Mr. RICHARD WORDSWORTH refuses to turn "good old York" to a zany. I remember Mr. PAUL DANEMAN's *Carlisle* as he pronounces the epitaph on his own *Mowbray*—one of the traditional "doubles" in our theatre—but the evening belongs, first and last, to the Voice: SHAKESPEARE's and Mr. SCOFIELD's.

Then *The Man*. In the play at Her Majesty's he comes early one morning to do the housework for a widow in an American town, and by night he is still on the premises, with all doors locked, the telephone disconnected, and murder likely at any minute. We gather that he would fill several pages in any case-book. Although he looks mild enough, he is as companionable as a nest of vipers.

This is a bit of Grand Guignol stretched like elastic. No one has her eyes poked out with knitting-needles; but we have the same old

fears while we ask how Mr. BERNARD BRADEN, intermittently a maniac, will dispose of Miss JOAN MILLER. It takes three-quarters of the evening for our nerves to tingle properly. Before this the dramatist, Mr. MEL DINELLI, seems to be playing for time. There is nothing in the



(*The Man*)  
Howard Wilton—MR. BERNARD BRADEN

repetitive dialogue: all depends upon the ultimate horror, the final Bedtime With Braden, and on the acting. This is first-rate, with Mr. PETER COTES' production to back it. Mr. BRADEN gets more and more sinister, Miss MILLER wonders whether there is boiling oil in it, and Miss JOY RODGERS looks in as a trying young woman who ought to be a victim. Even so, it will never be my favourite melodrama, and it is hardly a show-piece of the Theatre Advancing.

### Recommended

As a hair-raiser: *Murder Mistaken* (Vaudeville). As a family play: *For Better, For Worse* . . . (Comedy). For imaginative children: *The Dancing Princesses* (Embassy).

J. C. TREWIN



**LE LAC DES CYGNES** is nearly always with us in one form or another. From time to time it needs taking to pieces, refurbishing and putting together again—the more so in that it is not only a classic in its own right but a re-creation of the age-old legend of the Swan-Maiden. It has thus a double significance which will exercise the imagination of dancers, designers and producers so long as there exist a ballet-shoe, a pot of paint and a length of tarlatan.

The new production of *Le Lac* at Covent Garden is based as usual on the reproduction by SERGEYEV of the PETIPA-IVANOV choreography, with certain alterations and additions. The Waltz, to which FREDERICK ASHTON has composed a brilliant *pas-de-six*, has been restored to the first act, and the Neapolitan Dance, of which he has made a thing of bubbling gaiety and fluttering ribbons, to the third. The number of swan-maidens has been increased to a point at which one wishes that some of them would take flight, and there are more huntsmen and ladies-in-waiting than before. In all, Sadler's Wells has placed *Le Lac des Cygnes* firmly in the "grand" category.

LESLIE HURRY's designs no longer stress that neurotic and obsessional quality in the music of TCHAIKOVSKY that he and ROBERT HELPMANN exploited with such effect in *Hamlet* and that seemed still to haunt him when he designed *Le Lac* of ten years ago. This is a great improvement, for *Le Lac* is of a totally different order of feeling. The qualities which provide the key to the designer are the poetry and

## AT THE BALLET

*Le Lac des Cygnes* (COVENT GARDEN)

Slavic melancholy of the lakeside scenes and the formal brilliance of the ball, and this Mr. HURRY has grasped. Now, in place of a lakeside that resembled a purple vortex sucking dancers, orchestra and audience towards the back of the stage, he has given us a lake bathed in a mysterious blue light and girt with naturalistic trees and rocks rather in the manner of DÜRER; while the ball-scene, from being a dementia of swans' necks, has become a mediaeval pageant of gold, velvet and jewels in a simple Gothic setting with a large central window at which the anguished figure of *Odette* appears, weeping and wringing her hands.

All these changes are interesting and worth while; but there is one aspect of this ballet which still needs fresh thought—the character of *Odile*. The original "book" says that this evil counterfeit of *Odette* "coquettishly uses her beauty to lure him (*Siegfried*) on" to induce him to break his troth. But would the rolling eyes, knowing smiles and general brassiness of *Odile's* usual behaviour really ensnare a young man who had just conceived a passion for tenderness, modesty and all the other maidenly virtues? They would seem more likely to make him think *Odile* a hussy, just as they awaken in us the conviction that *Von Rothbart*, whose "familiar"



she is, is a very second-rate magician. The ready-made difference between *Odette* and *Odile* is as great as not only TCHAIKOVSKY but two separate choreographers, the one a poet and the other a brilliant academic, could make it; cannot ballet-producers think a little harder?

The dancers sharing the *Odette-Odile* rôle in this new production are BERYL GREY, NADIA NERINA, and ROWENA JACKSON (whom I have not seen). BERYL GREY, partnered romantically by JOHN FIELD, is a charming *Odette*, a dream-figure in utter contrast with the disagreeable *Odile* she presents, all arch grimaces. I prefer the *Odile* of NADIA NERINA, who wears a sequin on each eyelid and leaves the characterization, whether consciously or not, more or less at that. Her *Odette* is competent and serious, but at present no more than an outline-sketch. She is partnered excellently by ALEXIS RASSINE. D. C. B.

2 2

## MY NYLONS

**I**MPS of Fortune that attend  
Nylon when it clothes the leg,  
Hence your heartless pranks  
forfend,  
I a special mercy beg;  
Fifteen denier fifty-four,  
One pair only, is my store.

Let not ring nor finger-nail  
Pull the snag that speaks the  
dirge,  
Nor the sharp umbrella flail  
In the bus-queue's merry surge,  
Nor the sandal-buckle's prong  
Scrape my crossed foot along!

Nay, I have not finished yet;  
Claw of cat and tooth of dog,  
Burning ash from cigarette,  
Doorstep looming in a fog—  
Thus the horrid warnings flow,  
Maker's care for wearer's woe.

Then, good sprites (for so you are,  
Given but the smallest chance),  
Come from near and come from  
far  
Bringing normal circumstance,  
And it will be ages ere  
I shall need another pair!

ANDE



## BOOKING OFFICE



## The Secret Lives of Harold Laski

IT is remarkable how quickly the famous get forgotten nowadays after they die. The reputation of a Barrie or a Kipling or an Arnold Bennett disperses posthumously with the same suddenness as that of a Lloyd George or a Ramsay MacDonald or a Stanley Baldwin. A notable example was Bernard Shaw. Up to the time of his death his most trivial, if not senile, observations were received as brilliant shafts of wit. Barely was the breath out of his body when public interest in him evaporated. His house at Welwyn Garden City, which was to have been a national monument, attracted many fewer visitors than the most obscure and undistinguished country seat thrown open to the public at so much a head, and a project to raise a fund to perpetuate his memory had to be abandoned for lack of support. The citizenry of the Welfare State clearly prefer paying half-a-crown to feast their eyes on the haunts of the nobility to examining the domestic interior of the author of *Pygmalion*.

Another notable example is *Harold Laski*. It is only a couple of years since he died, but already Mr. Kingsley Martin's memoir of him (Gollancz, 21/-) has a forlorn, hopeless air, like an alpaca suit on a draughty autumn day. The Editor of the *New Statesman* was bound to write in a fairly adulatory way about Laski, though he manages gently to insinuate that as a scholar he scarcely fulfilled the high promise of his youth, and that as a politician he was frequently an embarrassment to his own side. In such cases it is usual to award a consolation prize. Laski, Mr. Martin stresses, was a brilliant teacher and talker, beloved of his students, and indefatigable in promoting their interests.

If Mr. Martin provides a coherent account of Laski's multitudinous activities, he barely touches upon his most evident, in some ways his most endearing, characteristic—his fabulous propensity for romancing. In this field he stood alone. There was nothing he touched which he did not embellish, and nothing he embellished which he did not ardently and continuously further embellish. All his innate romanticism, all his refusal to accept the dreary implications of the

political philosophy to which he ostensibly adhered, found expression in his fabrications. These were, in a sense, his virtue, his charm, his distinction. Subtract them from him and he would have been no different from any other eminent product of the London School of Economics.

There was nothing on earth to prevent him, too, from becoming Chancellor of the Exchequer, or at any rate President of the Board of Trade, except this lovable and most wonderful propensity for fabrication.

His biographer, admittedly, mentions the fact that his anecdotes were not invariably accurate. With reference to Laski's visit to Moscow and interview with Stalin in 1946, for instance, he writes that "Harold also told yarns, for which I have never found confirmation, about a second private interview between himself and Stalin." He did indeed tell yarns. It was all in direct speech. "Comrade Professor," Stalin called him, and, as the tale unfolded with innumerable repetitions, the whole Politbureau were there, seated round a table in the Kremlin. The Comrade Professor was asked his views on the world situation, and gave them at great length in no uncertain terms, so that they all fell silent—Stalin and Molotov and Malenkov and the others, listening, awed, as the Comrade Professor held forth.

This was only one specimen, and by no means the most unpalatable, of Laski's inveterate romancing. It is true that life to some extent caught up with him, so that yesterday's fabrication was liable to become to-morrow's actuality. An American friend remarked of him in his last years: "Harold has become so famous now that he is getting to know some of the people he has known all his life." For the most part, however, he managed to keep reality at bay. His very face remained unmarked—a youthful, inquiring, engaging, somehow absurd face, which seemed to bear no relation to the ponderous, and often seemingly interminable, sentences his tongue voiced and his pen wrote. It was a face oddly, though perhaps significantly, reminiscent of Charlie Chaplin.

Mr. Martin, inevitably, is primarily concerned with Laski's public activities. Beyond the fact that he was born on Cheetham Hill, that before he was twenty he distressed his father, Nathan Laski, by marrying a Gentile, and that he early achieved fabulous success as a teacher alike at the Harvard Law School and the London School of Economics, he tells us little about his subject's private life. Nor does he shed any appreciable new light on the various political controversies in which Laski was involved—notably his part in the 1945 election, and the libel action which resulted therefrom. One sentence in a letter to Laski from Mr. Attlee, dated May 1, 1944, and now printed for the first time, provides an excellent example of the sting which lies behind the leader of the Labour Party's air of bland and inoffensive insignificance. "I am sorry," Mr. Attlee wrote, "that you suggest I am verging towards MacDonaldism. As you have so well pointed out I have neither the personality nor the distinction to think that I shall have any value apart from the Party which I serve."





The fact is, Laski was more in the tradition of Mr. Polly than Robespierre, or even John Stuart Mill. In his dreams he saw himself, now as a great statesman, now as a mighty thinker, now as an ambassador performing prodigious feats of conciliation. Birkenhead no less than Lenin could seem heroic in his eyes. In that tragic direct speech, the poetry of falsehood, he would tell how Mr. Roosevelt or Stalin or Baldwin had sought his advice, how he had engineered in such a case the award of the O.M., and in such another induced the President of the United States to follow his advice.

Mr. Martin quotes from Laski's first written composition, a study of the Jewish character entitled "The Chosen People." Its style, as Mr. Martin points out, "is florid and obviously influenced by Pater"; it unmistakably evokes, in its texture rather than its matter, the novels of Disraeli. How easily, one cannot but conclude, might Laski, born some nine decades earlier, have reproduced Disraeli's astonishing performance; how easily might Disraeli, born into the Century of the Common Man, have taught at the London School of Economics and been the subject of a biography by Mr. Kingsley Martin.

MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE

## Two Attitudes to the Noble Savage

**The Zambesi Journal of James Stewart, 1862-1863.**  
Edited by J. P. R. Wallis. *Chatto and Windus*, 35/-.

**The Happy Island.** Bengt Danielsson. *Allen and Unwin*, 15/-.

*The Zambesi Journal of James Stewart, 1862-1863*, usefully edited and introduced by Mr. J. P. R. Wallis, is a sad record of disillusionment. Stewart was sent to Nyasaland to reconnoitre for a Free Kirk mission, and went there worshipping Livingstone and prepared by his enthusiastic reports for a peaceful Africa crammed with eager souls impatient to be converted. Both hero and country were a shattering disappointment. The austere young Scotsman was immediately displeased by the levity of Livingstone's entourage, and looked in vain among the Africans for the rugged principles of his beloved Invercroskie.

Livingstone's outfit at this period was certainly haywire. He travelled in a steam-launch which consumed the fruits of a day's wooding in a few hours and was frequently aground; food supplies were haphazard, while fever and kindred ills raged through the party; and about his own plans he was studiously uncommunicative. Stewart soon began to wonder if church work was possible where missionaries had to be as quick on the trigger as his host proved himself. Shocked by Livingstone's practical attitude to the Sabbath, he was appalled by the mounting evidence of his optimism. On the strength of his rosy accounts Stewart had won the interest of the Lancashire cotton magnates; and the more he saw of the Africans the less he thought of them as potential toilers. By the stern standards of Invercroskie he found them utterly wanting. They sold one another as slaves, and ate porridge out of straw hats. Their songs and dances were obscene, and, worst of all, they were not only indolent but

actually enjoyed doing nothing. It took Stewart, whose feeling for innocent pleasure was nil, some time to grasp this simple truth. Before he left he expressed his anger with Livingstone by flinging one of his books into the river; but gradually he came round to a fairer point of view, and when later he returned to found a thriving mission he called it Livingstonia.

He seems to have been tactless, opinionated, and rather inhuman, but the letters from other missionaries which are included show he could be likeable. And he wrote excellent descriptive prose, that brings the wild beauty of the Zambesi, its maddening discomforts, its birds and beasts, all vigorously to life. He was even capable of an occasional flash of acid humour, as when he says of the Bishop's sister that "age has chilled her sympathies and what are not already frozen are tied up in denominational bands."

Mr. Bengt Danielsson's approach to a primitive people was exactly the opposite. When he went back with his wife to Raroia, the South Seas island where he had landed with the rest of the Kon-Tiki's crew, it was to study with delight a magic pocket of idle pleasure still relatively unspoiled. *The Happy Island* is admirable sociology, and also extremely entertaining. The Raroians have everything at hand for an easy life in an almost perfect climate. The coconut palm gives them food and fuel, the sea teems with a magnificent assortment of delicious fish. Money, however, has been forced on them by the value of copra, from the making of which the average annual income per household is £550. As they have no idea of saving—and little reason to save—this is blown as soon as earned on gigantic benders in Papeete and on such absurdities as bicycles and tea-services, bought at ceiling prices from exploiting Chinese traders. Natural diet has given way to canned goods, and so to the usual unfortunate diseases introduced by the white man is now added a communal stomach-ache. The old oral Polynesian literature is almost forgotten, and crafts are threatened; but all this process of dissolution is much slower in Raroia than in the more visited islands, and Mr. Danielsson still found there spontaneous gaiety and humour, great kindness, a passion for music and dancing, and a refreshing joy in the present. The sole tax is on dogs, and, as ratters are exempt, all dogs are ratters. Life is as simple as that. Apart from an embarrassing torrent of "H'm's" in the dialogue, Mr. F. H. Lyon's translation serves well, and there are a number of good photographs.

ERIC KEOWN

**Rupert of the Rhine.** Bernard Fergusson. *Collins*, 7/6

A dash of that other Rupert (he of Hentzau) has combined with chivalry, unimpeachable honour and outstanding physical perfections to endear the happy-go-lucky nephew of unhappy-go-unlucky Charles the First to all students of history. If his methods were too headstrong to please the diplomats and his conduct occasionally questionable and questioned, it is impossible not to admire his unswerving devotion to his vacillating uncle and to that boisterous brother after

whose loss at sea he was never the same man. Colonel Fergusson's brief study is rather ill-balanced; a professional soldier himself, he allots too much space to the hero of the Civil War; too little to that intriguing and less familiar figure Rupert the sailor, the pirate, the research chemist, the inventor, the M.F.H., the colonial *entrepreneur*. But his firmly-drawn picture, based on judicious selection of detail, is admirably executed and worthily upholds the high traditions of the "Brief Lives" series in which it forms an item.

H. B.

**Professional People.** Roy Lewis and Angus Maude.  
*Phanix House, 18/-*

In an era marked by insistent pressure for recognition among numberless new technologies here is a valiant attempt to sort out a medley of diverse tendencies while inquiring what the future may have in store for genuinely professional workers. The border-lines seem daily less well defined, the inability of any civilization to carry more than some maximum proportion of learned advisers becomes constantly more apparent, the old fight for control between technicians and administrators rages more fiercely than ever and all the time the demands of social justice combine with the elaborations of finance to breed paper work and specialists. To crown it all, the division of loyalties between State employer and individual client or patient or customer presents ever more difficult ethical problems. In a book that fills itself to the brim with a commotion of changing ideas and

the babble of a hundred institutes, associations, faculties and societies pressing the vocational claims of auctioneers, or insurance brokers, or highway engineers, or sales managers, a sympathetic study of the special problems of the Church comes humanly with a sense almost of relief.

C. C. P.

**H.M.S. Marlborough Will Enter Harbour.** Nicholas Monsarrat. Illustrated by James Holland. *Cannell, 12/6*

Why ships should make such infallibly successful material for literature is hard to say. *Mutatis mutandis*, could Nicholas Monsarrat have scored an equal triumph if, instead of "The Cruel Sea," he had written a war-time saga of a goods-engine or a mobile canteen? Whatever the explanation, this long-short (90-page) tale of a torpedoed sloop's struggle back to harbour proves the point yet again. The critical action is over almost at once, and the rest of the story is concerned simply with routine under stress; yet even though the characters are only lightly sketched in, the tension lasts until the last word. The book is generously illustrated with drawings by James Holland—perhaps it is ungrateful to wish that he had shown us more of the ship and less of a crew oddly alike in face and bearing—and is very handsomely produced altogether.

B. A. Y.

#### SHORTER NOTES

**The Sky and its Mysteries.** E. Agar Beet. *Bell, 15/-*. Books on astronomy intimidate the layman, dazing his mind with light-year measuring-rods of Time and Space. Mr. Agar Beet, who is senior science master at the Nautical College, Pangbourne, and secretary of the British Astronomical Association, makes a fascinating account of some of the unsolved mysteries more illuminating than is usual by including a chapter on the methods and tools of astronomy. Capital drawings and photographs.

**Reader's Digest Omnibus.** André Deutsch, 15/-. Thirty years of successful potting are now potted into a single volume and decorated with a nimble foreword by H. E. Bates. The contents range from "Obey that Impulse," "How Harmful are Cigarettes?" and "Are You Alive?" to first-rate war reports and short pieces by Steinbeck, Cronin, Julian Huxley and Albert Schweitzer. Fair enough, but fifteen shillings is a lot of money.

**The Rift in the Lute.** Noel Langley. *Barker, 10/6*. Adventures of an oriental Candide, an innocent who has to learn wisdom the hard way in a China little like the one we know. A moderately entertaining quasi-philosophical trifle, with fantasy, violence, a touch of sentiment and some more or less delicate improprieties for ingredients.

**An Episode of the Spanish War. 1739-1744.** Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. Arthur C. Murray, C.M.G., D.S.O. *Seeley Service, 10/6*. The principal concern of this slender volume is a brisk exchange of broadsides between the author and Vice-Admiral Boyle Somerville, occasioned by the latter's published reflections on the professional honour of Colonel Murray's ancestor with Anson's squadron and that of his colleague Captain Legge.

**The Hidden Hand.** Eden Phillpotts. *Hutchinson, 10/6*. A dozen Dartmoor stories about a white witch of Victorian times, written with the veteran author's happiest mingling of humour and wisdom. His heroine, Charity Crymes, regards with delightfully complacent admiration her own cleverness in assisting unlucky lovers, bringing down evil-doers and generally managing the affairs of half Dartmoor.

**Reclining Figure.** Marco Page. *Eyre and Spottiswoode, 9/6*. Fairish mixture of puzzles and thrills in the art-forging world of California. Lavish display of technicalities. Readable but not outstanding. Much the best part of the book is the he-she dialogue, often a weak spot in sleuthies.



## THE MATCHLESS BOXES

THE vicar put his parcel down beside his chair and accepted a glass of sherry.

"We have a bone to pick with you, Charles," said Purbright's wife.

"Little do you know," said Purbright, "what a dangerous time you have chosen to come and visit us."

"To come and visit us *at*," said the vicar.

"Am I right," asked Purbright's wife, "in saying that you set my son a holiday task for last holidays?"

"Yes," said the vicar, holding his unlit pipe in the manner of one accustomed to modelling for tobacco advertisements, and looking round absently for a match. "Your son has the privilege of learning divinity from me. In an effort to teach my class the names of the Books of the Bible, and to occupy their little hands during their holidays, I required of them that they should make a Bible Library: a small wooden bookshelf with books made of match-boxes and labelled with the sixty-six Books of the Bible."

"Give him Hezekiah," said Purbright's wife. "He needs a light." Purbright handed a match-box across.

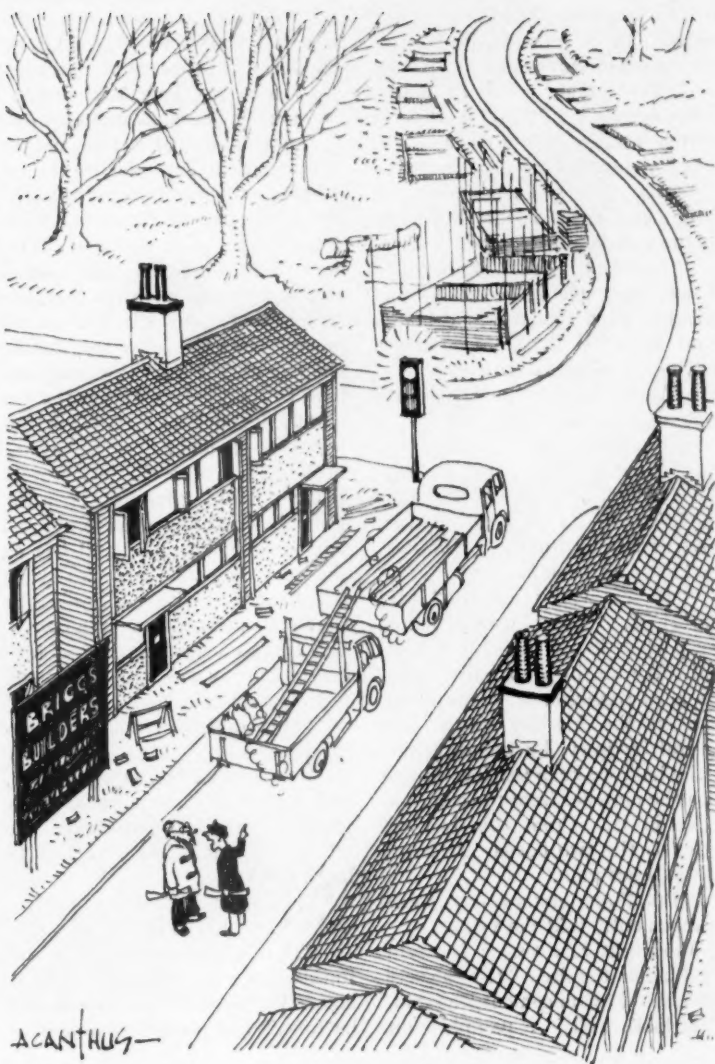
"I must say," continued the vicar, "that your little lad's effort was a fine one; much work had been done, even if the result was a rhomboid as sturdy as a soap bubble. I gave him twenty-seven out of fifty."

"Thank you very much indeed," said Purbright. "Which boy got top marks?"

"Johnny Clamp," said the vicar. "A most gratifying effort: polished mahogany and little brass handles; forty-nine out of fifty I gave him. If he had not spelt Zephaniah with an 'f' he'd have had full marks. The boy has capabilities beyond his years."

"And a father who's a master joiner with Cloud and Butterwick's," said Purbright.

"Purbright works in an office," said Purbright's wife.



*"We'd have been well up to schedule  
if it hadn't been for the lights!"*

"I am not good with my hands," said Purbright. "I cannot even keep a lighter serviceable—and how we need one in this house just at present! My carpentry is normally confined to the daily task of pushing the screws of the hinges of the garage door back into holes too large for them." His voice caught. "That soap bubble took me four hours and two orange boxes."

"I have hurt your feelings," said the vicar.

"No, no," said Purbright in a high voice. "Oh, no. But I do think that a wooden bookshelf is too much either for the son of a sedentary worker or for the sedentary worker himself."

"It is not so much, Charles, that we object to your setting whole families a holiday task," said Purbright's wife, refilling sherry glasses. "After all, we are your parishioners. We do not even greatly mind turning to and earning marks for our



son, unethical as such a proceeding would normally be. But we do object to the way you have disorganized our home."

"That library," said Purbright, with emphasis, "used up all our match-boxes. My wife and son spent all afternoon——"

"To the accompaniment of bangs and crashes from Purbright in the garage," interposed his wife.

"—writing Jude, Zephaniah, Amos, etc., on little labels, and sticking them to our whole household stock of boxes of matches. 1 Kings, 2 Kings, Leviticus . . ."

"And Hezekiah," said the vicar, looking at the box in his hand.

"I cannot understand how the Authorized Version came to omit the Book of Hezekiah," said Purbright's wife. "I am sure you often read us lessons from it. However, we kept that book back."

"It was lucky we did," said Purbright. "Apart from a box in my pocket, it was the only one we had. We are in a terrifying mess. We keep Hezekiah in here, and my box on the kitchen stove. In neutral territory, by the telephone in the hall, we keep the button-bag with the matches from the sixty-six boxes in it. From this bag we replenish the two boxes. At least, that was our plan."

"But that sounds a reasonable arrangement," said the vicar.

Purbright rose to his feet and stood before the fire. "It's the sort of reasonable arrangement," he said, "that looks well in a pamphlet on

office and warehouse management, but for practical housekeeping it is useless. Unless there is a kitchen cupboard full of boxes of matches to steal from my wife, and unless I have half a dozen boxes on my desk for my wife to steal, nothing gets lit. We are normal people: we do not, with careful forethought, take the box to the bag, fill the box and take it back to the stove or in here. What we do is to get the bag, take a match out of it, strike it on the box, and leave the bag by the box on the stove. Then the other one, finding the bag absent from the telephone, goes to the kitchen, brings the box and the bag in here, strikes a match, lights the fire and leaves the bag and both boxes in here. In the last week I have found innumerable variations: box and bag on the stove and box in here; box, box and bag on the stove; bag and two boxes by the telephone; bag with box inside it, in the wood-shed and box on the stove; box by the telephone, bag in here and box in my wife's handbag; and now, Hezekiah in your pocket——"

"Oh," said the vicar, surrendering Hezekiah.

"—the other box in my pocket, and the bag up there on the mantelpiece. Imagine yourself in the kitchen at this minute, longing to boil a kettle."

The vicar looked up. "It's a nice bag," he said.

"That's another thing," said Purbright's wife. "It's the button-bag. We've nowhere to put the buttons." She pointed to a heap of

buttons resting upon a sheet of newspaper in the corner.

The vicar reached down for his parcel and opened it. "I brought back your rhomboid soap bubble with all its books intact," he said. "You could keep the buttons, neatly classified, in the little shelves."

"Certainly not," said Purbright's wife. "The matches shall go back from bag to boxes, and the buttons back into their bag."

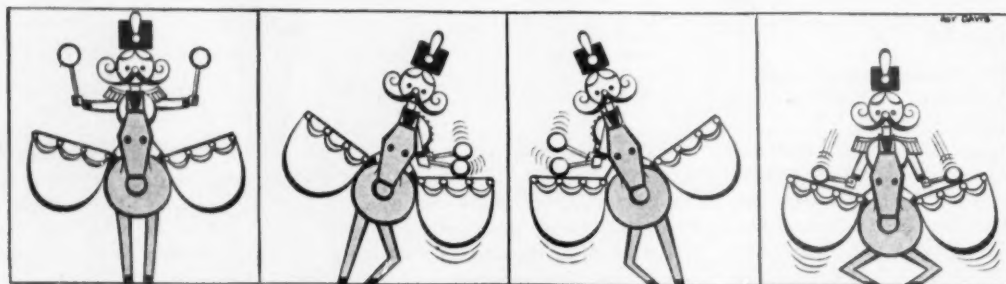
"The reason I make the suggestion," said the vicar, finishing his sherry and rising to his feet, "is that you may need those boxes again."

"Whatever do you mean?" asked Purbright.

"I shall soon be setting the task for next holidays," said the vicar. "A church complete with fittings—font, pulpit, lectern, everything—all to be made of empty match-boxes."

## ADVICE

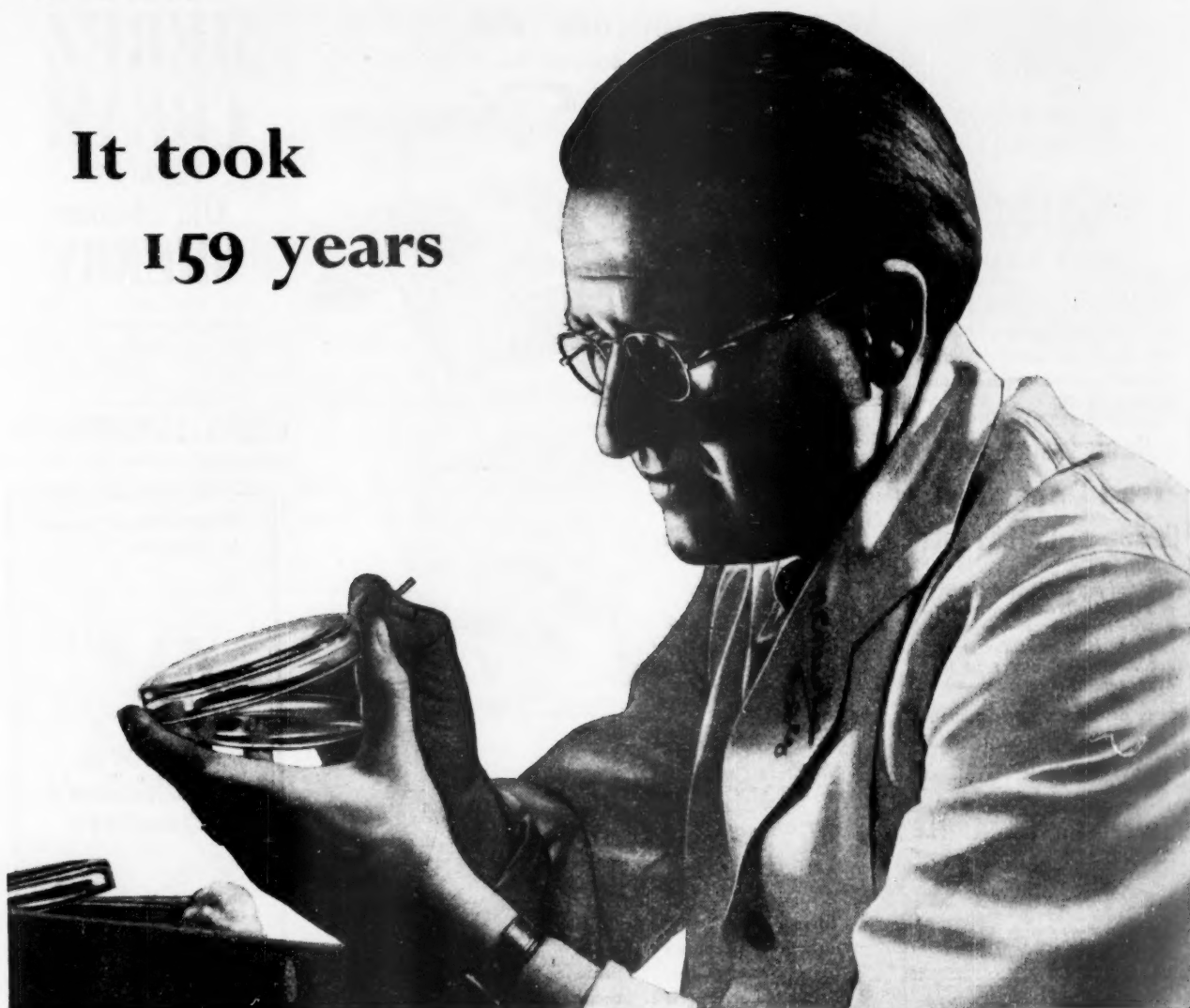
ONLY a hock bottle can hope to bottle hock, for the taper-topped hock bottle has an epiglottal throttle made *ad hoc*; as the anxious Hottentot'll seek his erring axolotl, as puncture follows pot-hole or as tick depends on tock, so the hock is *propter* bottle and the bottle is *post hoc*. Then hock not your old hock bottle, for it's what'll bottle hock. ALUN LLEWELLYN



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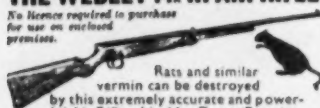
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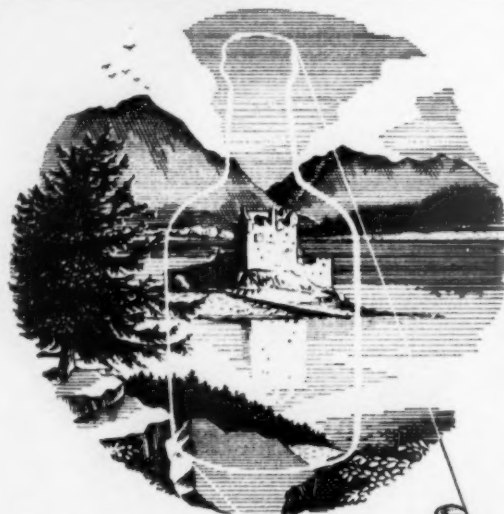
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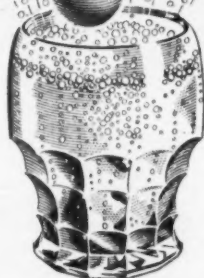


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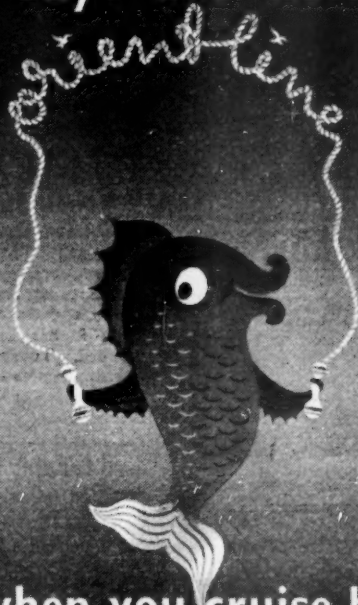


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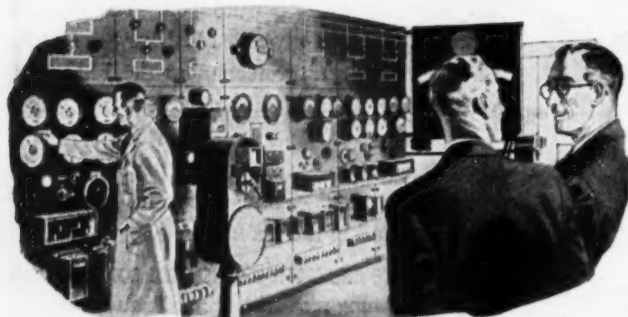
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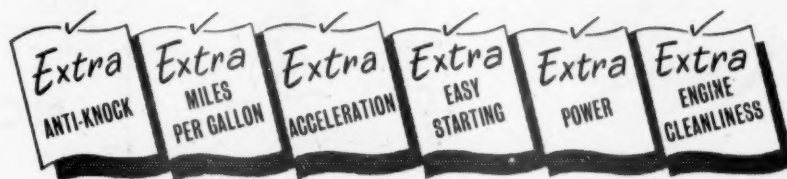
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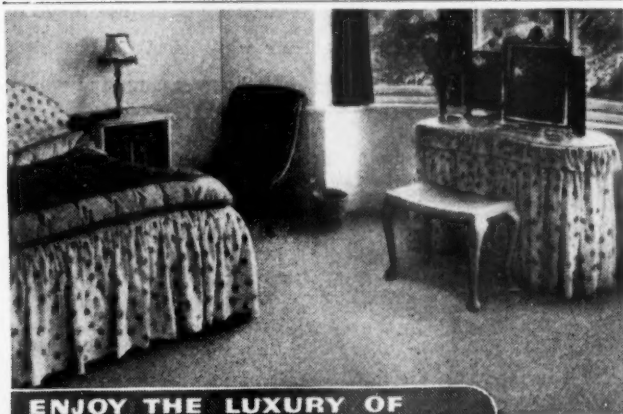
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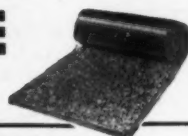
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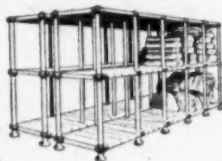


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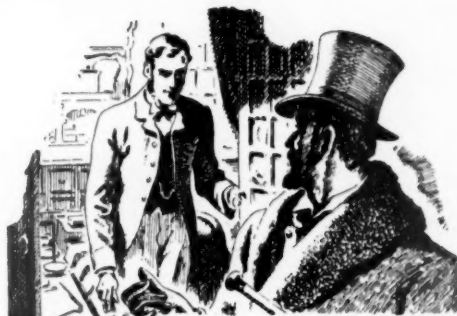
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